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Res.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Friends, Society of (Progressive)

PENNSYLVANIA YEARLY MEETING

OF

Progressive Friends,

HELD AT LONGWOOD, CHESTER COUNTY,

FIFTH MONTH, 1856.

(a)

NEW YORK:

JOHN F. TROW, PRINTER, 377 & 379 BROADWAY,
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Address of the Clerks.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, } Hamorton, Chester Co., Pa.
RUHANEY WAY,
OLIVER JOHNSON, 138 Nassau Street, New York.

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Minutes.

ON First-day morning, the 18th of Fifth month, 1856, THE PENNSYLVANIA YEARLY MEETING OF PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS convened in the meeting-house at Longwood, Chester County. The house was densely crowded, and hundreds, unable to get within the walls, remained on the adjoining grounds. Prayer was offered by JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, after which the Call issued by the Committee of Arrangements was read, as follows :

Upon the undersigned devolves the pleasant duty of inviting the friends of Truth, Purity, and Progress, without distinction of sect or name or nation, to attend the FOURTH ANNUAL CONVOCATION OF PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS, to be held in the meeting-house at Longwood, Chester Co., Pa., commencing on First-day, the eighteenth of Fifth month, 1856, at 10 o'clock, A. M., and continuing as long as circumstances may seem to require—probably for three days.

The Progressive Friends have no creed as a basis of association. Their object is not to build up a Sect, armed with ecclesiastical power, and endowed with authority to define the boundaries of thought and restrain the freedom of speech and action, but to unite persons of every shade of theological opinion, in ONE SPIRIT OF LOVE, to "do good unto all men as they have opportunity;" to cultivate in themselves whatsoever is pure, generous and ennobling; to worship God in the service of Humanity; to investigate those questions of individual and social duty, which the experiences of daily life and the conflicts of sects, parties, classes, and nationalities, are perpetually evolving; to vindicate the primordial rights of man, and plead the cause of the poor, the ignorant, the degraded, and the oppressed; to testify against those systems of popular wickedness which derive their support from a false Church and a corrupt Government; to promote the cause of "pure and undefiled religion," by a firm resistance to the impositions of Church-craft and Priest-craft; to elevate the standard of public morals, by teaching men to revere, as paramount to all human codes, the law written by the finger of God in their own minds and hearts; to exemplify the spirit of Universal Brotherhood, and to proclaim the gospel of "Peace on earth, good will to men."

All those who desire to co-operate with us, and those we represent, in this work of beneficence and love, are earnestly invited to meet with us, at the time and place above named. Nay, more—in the language of the Hebrew prophet, we say, "Whosoever WILL, let him come."

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,	RUTH DUGDALE,
SIDNEY P. CURTIS,	WILLIAM BARNARD,
H. M. DARLINGTON,	LIZZIE McFARLAN,
ROWLAND JOHNSON,	JOSIAH WILSON,
HANNAH PENNOCK,	OLIVER JOHNSON,
SALLIE C. COATES,	AMELIA JACKSON,
ISAAC MENDENHALL.	

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE congratulated the meeting in view of the propitious circumstances under which it had convened, and introduced SAMUEL J. MAY, minister of the Unitarian Church, Syracuse, New York, who read the following hymn, asking all who could do so, to unite with him in singing it :

WHILE Thee I seek, protecting Power,
Be my vain wishes stilled;
And may this consecrated hour
With better hopes be filled.

Thy love the power of thought bestowed,
To Thee my thoughts would soar;
Thy mercy o'er my life hath flowed,
That mercy I adore.

In each event of life, how clear
Thy ruling hand I see,
Each blessing to my soul more dear,
Because conferred by Thee.

In every joy that crowns my days,
In every pain I bear,
My heart shall find delight in praise,
Or seek relief in prayer.

When gladness wings my favored hour,
Thy love my thoughts shall fill;
Resigned, when storms of sorrow lower,
My soul shall meet Thy will.

My lifted eye without a tear
The gathering storm shall see;
My steadfast heart will know no fear,
That heart shall rest on Thee.

After the singing, in which several friends joined, SAMUEL J. MAY delivered a very impressive discourse upon "FALSE IDEAS OF GOD AND HIS GOVERNMENT," which was heard with close attention and deep interest. LUCRETIA MOTT also uttered an earnest testimony on the same subject.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, in view of the unusual amount of business upon the table and of his own feeble health, asked that OLIVER JOHNSON might be permitted to assist the Clerks in the discharge of their duties. The request was complied with. The meeting was then briefly addressed by WILLIAM LLOYD.

Epistles were read from the WATERLOO (N. Y.) and OHIO YEARLY MEETINGS OF FRIENDS OF HUMAN PROGRESS—bodies formed on principles the same as ours—and from the FRIENDS OF HUMAN PROGRESS in North Collins, Erie Co., N. Y. These communications conveyed cheering intelligence of the progress of religious and social reform, and breathed a spirit of fraternal affection and sympathy, which made them peculiarly welcome. EDWARD WEBB, RUHANEY WAY, PHILENA HEALD, ELIZABETH JACKSON, LEA PUSEY, PRISCILLA BARNARD, and JOHN G. JACKSON, were appointed a Committee to prepare replies.

it. It should be the library of the entire University of New York, or it may be of the Astor University. It is a magnificent beginning, which demands a corresponding completion. Its very existence contains an inspiration. Is not the spirit, as well as the wealth which created it, an inheritance?

Who will begin the great work? If but one man could be found to begin it, his example would electrify hundreds.

Is it not plain now that the public schools, the colleges, and the University, would form one grand system, sustaining each other, pouring life into each other, and co-working to one great end?

Let the highest institution take the initiative. This, once brought into existence, would mould into proper forms all the other grades, and perfect them. The history of education shows us that the highest institutions have ever led on the educational development.



IV.

THE ROYAL ARTISANS' INSTITUTE OF BERLIN.

WE have referred to the institution which Mr. Cooper has founded in New York for mechanics. This has suggested to us to give some account of a like institution in Berlin.

The Royal Institute for Artizans is supported in part by the government, and in part by the avails of a legacy of \$225,000. It forms the culminating point of a system of education for engineers and mechanics. In all the provinces, there are provincial artisan schools designed especially for mechanics. From these a certain number of pupils are selected according to merit, and permitted to enter the higher institute in Berlin. The number of students in the Royal Institute is limited to two hundred. About forty of these are supported in full. Strangers are also admitted without any charge for tuition. Of those who enter regularly on the foundation, it is required that they shall have reached seventeen years of age, shall have studied the elements of chemistry and natural philosophy, and all the mathematics, preparatory to a commencement of the Calculus, and also shall have worked one year at some mechanic art.

The course upon which they enter at the Royal Institute comprises three years. The first year, they pursue in com-

mon a course in mathematics, physical science, and drawing. At the second year they are divided into three classes, each student selecting his class—the class of chemists, the class of engineers, and the class of mechanics, or perhaps more properly the class of house-builders. The second year is spent in studies according with these three divisions. During the third year, work and study are conjoined: the chemists spend a part of every day in the laboratory, in making analyses, and indeed in every form of manipulation under the direction of the professor of chemistry; the engineers are in the work-shop engaged in making machinery, steam engines, &c.; and the house-builders make models of every description of building or parts of the same, and mould in clay various architectural ornaments. There are rooms also where moulds are framed for castings.

Kiss, the celebrated author of the noble group in bronze, of the Amazon and the Tiger, which stands in front of the Museum, gives instruction in moulding figures, architectural ornaments, and various models for bronze and iron castings.

Rammelsberg, a distinguished professor of chemistry in the University, gives instruction in this department in the Institute. The instructors are generally able men. All the apparatus and preparations are on an ample scale. The chemical laboratory for the use of the students is large and fully furnished. There is also a laboratory where Rammelsberg gives his lectures; and in addition to this he has his own private laboratory. The work-shops are all large and commodious, and contain a great deal of machinery, worked by a steam engine. Models are made at the Institute for the use of the provincial schools. There is a room for engraving; there is another for weaving patterns of various fabrics; and there is a large room filled with models of machinery and buildings. The department of natural philosophy is provided with a very complete set of apparatus. In drawing the instruction is very thorough. Connected with this department is a fine gallery filled with casts in plaster of some of the most celebrated pieces of ancient and modern sculpture. And, besides all this, there is a library well furnished with books relating to the subjects of study; and a reading-room containing all the best scientific journals of Germany, France, England, and America. Everything seems to be provided that could be desired. It is a perfect institution of the kind.

Letters, expressing a warm interest in the objects of our association and a hearty concurrence in the anti-sectarian and progressive principles upon which it was formed, and containing messages of fraternal affection, were received from the following absent friends, viz :

L. MARIA CHILD,	ANTOINETTE BROWN BLACKWELL,
O. B. FROTHINGHAM,	LUCY STONE BLACKWELL,
MONCURE D. CONWAY,	WM. LLOYD GARRISON,
GERRIT SMITH,	SAMUEL LONGFELLOW,
JOHN G. FEE,	SARAH B. DUGDALE,
THE HUTCHINSON FAMILY,	DANIEL S. WHITNEY,
WM. HENRY FISH,	CHARLES K. WHIPPLE,
N. H. WHITING,	RICHARD MENDENHALL,
ROBERT HASSALL,	MELLISSA DAWES,
THOMAS J. MUMFORD,	HENRY CHARLES,
JAMES RICHARDSON, JR.	D. VINES,

JOSIAH BOND.

Grateful for the timely words of sympathy and counsel received from these beloved friends, the Meeting directed the Clerks to send to each of them a copy of its proceedings. The letters were referred to the Committee of Publication, with instructions to publish them, or such portions of them as they may deem advisable.

The reading of these letters elicited remarks from DAVID A. WASSON, (Minister of the Free Church in Groveland, Mass.), LUCRETIA MOTT, EUSEBIUS BARNARD, and E. FISH.

Committees were appointed as follows :—

On Slavery.—SIMON BARNARD, THOMAS WHITSON, JACOB HARVEY, THOMAS HAMBLETON, HANNAH M. DARLINGTON, ALICE JACKSON, LYDIA COX, EPHRAIM WILSON, CASTNER HANWAX, WM. H. SNOWDEN.

Temperance.—FRANKLIN DARLINGTON, JAS. C. JACKSON, AMELIA JACKSON, SARAH PRESTON, SUSANNA CHAMBERS, SAMUEL PENNOCK, WILLIAM WALTERS, SARAH M. BARNARD, REBECCA TAYLOR, PETER WILSON, JOHN AGNEW, SARAH A. ENTRIKEN, M. D.; HENRY SMITH, JOHN HAZLETON.

Treatment of Criminals.—SIDNEY PEIRCE CURTIS, HANNAH PENNOCK, JACOB T. STERN, MARY A. W. JOHNSON, DR. I. D. JOHNSON.

Woman's Rights.—MARY A. W. JOHNSON, SARAH BARNARD, DINAH MENDENHALL, SAMUEL J. MAY, JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, AGNES SANDERS, FREDERICK W. EVANS, DAVID A. WASSON, JANE KNIGHT, DEBORAH PENNOCK.

Evils of Tobacco.—RUTH DUGDALE, MARTHA CHAMBERS, MIRIAM WORRELL, R. HENRY LAMBORN, JOHN WILSON, ESTHER HAYES, SALLY PUSEY, J. WILLIAM COX, DANIEL BONSALL, DINAH MENDENHALL, JACOB T. STERN.

On Limiting the Acquisition of Property.—SAMUEL J. MAY, WILLIAM CHASE,

ALFRED H. LOVE, WILLIAM BARNARD, THOMAS GARRETT, OLIVER JOHNSON, ELI HAMBLETON, EUSEBIUS BARNARD, WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER, JOHN COX, SAMUEL MYERS.

WILLIAM BARNARD, JOSIAH WILSON, and PETER WILSON were appointed a Committee to settle with the Treasurer, to report to the Meeting the state of the finances; and nominate a suitable person to serve as Treasurer for the ensuing year. The same friends were also requested to nominate Clerks for the ensuing year, and to report to-morrow morning.

After a brief address by SAMUEL J. MAY, the meeting adjourned.

SECOND DAY—MORNING SESSION.

PETER WILSON, from the Committee on the nomination of Clerks, submitted a Report recommending the appointment of JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, RUHANEY WAY, and OLIVER JOHNSON. The recommendation was approved, and they were appointed accordingly.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE called attention to the subject of Education, suggesting the inquiry whether the Meeting ought not to adopt some definite measures for the promotion thereof. A very interesting discussion followed, SAMUEL MYERS (of Ohio), THOMAS HAMBLETON, WILLIAM LLOYD, SAMUEL J. MAY, WILLIAM B. ELLIOTT, WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER, WILLIAM BARNARD, and PETER WILSON, taking part therein. Many striking thoughts were expressed, and the meeting, deeply impressed with the importance of the subject, appointed a Committee, consisting of the following persons, to report this year or the next, as way may open:—JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, HANNAH M. DARLINGTON, JACOB W. HARVEY, JOSIAH WILSON, SAMUEL J. MAY, WILLIAM SHIELD, AGNES SANDERS, SUSANNA CHAMBERS, RACHEL ANNA LAMBORN, ALICE JACKSON, M. D. CONWAY, MARTHA L. BARNARD, SAMUEL MYERS, PHILENA HEALD, ELIZABETH JACKSON, MARIA AGNEW, ISAAC MENDENHALL, LEA PUSEY, AARON MENDENHALL.

PETER WILSON, from the Committee appointed to settle with the Treasurer, submitted a Report, showing the receipts of the past year to have been \$268.04, the expenditures \$258.23; leaving a balance now on hand of \$9.81. The Committee recommended the appointment of ISAAC MENDENHALL as Treasurer for the ensuing year. The report was accepted and the appointment made accordingly. The Meeting then proceeded to take contributions, to defray the expenses of the current

year, remarks on the growing importance of the work in which we are engaged being offered by J. A. DUGDALE, OLIVER JOHNSON, S. J. MAY, MONCURE D. CONWAY (Pastor of the Unitarian Church, Washington, D. C.) ABRAHAM HUNSICKER (Mennonist preacher), WILLIAM CHASE, and LUCRETIA MOTT. The sum of \$249.00 was contributed.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

SAMUEL J. MAY, from the Committee on Limiting the Acquisition of Property, submitted a paper on "The Relations of Capital and Labor," which led to a very interesting discussion, the following persons taking part therein: FREDERICK W. EVANS (from the Shaker Society at New Lebanon, N. Y.), W. B. ELLIOTT, OLIVER JOHNSON, EPHRAIM WILSON, REUBEN WEBB, JACOB L. PAXSON, DAVID A. WASSON, EBENEZER JAMES, WILLIAM BARNARD, ALFRED H. LOVE, JAMES HENRY, SAMUEL J. MAY, CALEB JACKSON. A great diversity of views was exhibited, but the discussion, though earnest, was characterized by a fraternal spirit. The whole subject was recommitted to the Committee for further consideration, with leave to report this year or next, as way may open.

The Committee on the Treatment Due to Criminals, submitted a memorial addressed to the Legislature of Pennsylvania, which was accepted and ordered to be signed and forwarded. Remarks on the subject were offered by THOMAS HAMBLETON, S. J. MAY, and MONCURE D. CONWAY.

LUCRETIA MOTT being under the necessity of leaving the Meeting at the close of the present session, made a brief address, expressive of her sympathy with the objects and principles of our association, and read a very interesting extract of a letter from ELIZABETH CADY STANTON, of Seneca Falls, New York, in which that earnest friend of humanity expressed similar sentiments.

THIRD DAY—MORNING SESSION.

The Meeting convened at the appointed time, a large assembly being present. The interest in the proceedings appeared to increase rather than diminish, from day to day.

SAMUEL J. MAY read, and a few friends united in singing, the following hymn :

YES ! we trust the day is breaking,
Joyful times are near at hand ;
God, the mighty God, is speaking
• By His word in every land :
God is speaking—
Darkness flies at His command.

With the voice of joy and singling,
Let us hail the dawning ray ;
Lo ! the blessed day-star, bringing
Over the earth a glorious day :
At His rising,
Gloom and darkness flee away.

WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER presented a paper suggesting to the friends of Progress and Reform the propriety and usefulness of meeting together on the first day of the week for mutual improvement and edification. Remarks were offered by CALEB S. JACKSON, EBENEZER JAMES, C. DARLINGTON, OLIVER JOHNSON, WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER, FREDERICK W. EVANS, SAMUEL J. MAY, REUBEN WEBB, MONCURE D. CONWAY, WILLIAM BARNARD, E. FISH, and EUSEBIUS BARNARD ; after which the paper was referred to a Committee, consisting of the following persons, viz: WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER, CALEB S. JACKSON, C. DARLINGTON, SAMUEL J. MAY, SARAH M. BARNARD, EBENEZER JAMES, SIDNEY P. CURTIS, MONCURE D. CONWAY, FREDERICK W. EVANS, ALFRED H. LOVE.

OLIVER JOHNSON, from the Committee on that subject, appointed two years ago, submitted a paper entitled "AMUSEMENTS—THEIR USES AND ABUSES." The reading was followed by remarks from WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER, JAMES HENRY, MARY J. PENNOCK, REUBEN WEBB, and CALEB S. JACKSON.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Meeting proceeded to consider the paper on Amusements. The discussion was earnest, and for the most part exceedingly interesting, the following persons taking part therein, viz: CALEB S. JACKSON, MONCURE D. CONWAY, HARRIET BULLARD (from the Shaker Society, New Lebanon, N. Y.), DAVID A. WASSON, REUBEN WEBB, SAMUEL J. MAY, FREDERICK W. EVANS, THOMAS HAMBLETON, WILLIAM LLOYD, JOHN G. JACKSON, WILLIAM B. ELLIOTT, WILLIAM CHASE, MARY A. W. JOHNSON, WILLIAM BARNARD, SIMPSON PRESTON, SAMUEL MYERS, DANIEL BONSALL, CALEB S. JACKSON, C. DARLINGTON, EPHRAIM WILSON, WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER, EBENEZER JAMES, BARTHolemew FUSSELL, MORTON PENNOCK, SIDNEY P. CURTIS, ALFRED H. LOVE, ANNA HIBBS, SUSANNA CHAMBERS. The paper was adopted.

FOURTH DAY—MORNING SESSION.

The Committee on Education submitted the following Report:—

To the Yearly Meeting.—The Committee on Education have had two interesting meetings, and agreed to submit to Sub-Committees the following Interrogatories, with a view of embodying them in a general Report, to be presented to the Yearly Meeting next year.

On behalf of the Committee,

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,
H. M. DARLINGTON.

Questions to be referred to the several members of the Committee on Education.

1. Shall the effort proposed be made in the establishment of an independent Seminary of Learning, or shall it be directed towards the enlargement and improvement of our Public System of Common Schools, proffering to this community the building, the apparatus, and a due portion of the funds necessary for a High Union School, on condition that the other schools in this vicinity shall be graded with reference to this, and a due portion of the public money be obtained towards the support of said Union School?
2. Shall there be one High School established for both sexes together, or one for each sex separately?
3. What shall be the course of instruction to be given in the proposed school or schools?
4. What provision shall be made for the physical training of the pupils?
5. What ought to be the compensation of the teachers?
6. At what age should children commence their school education, and what portion of time during their minority should be occupied in attending school in order to secure the greatest mental acquirements, consistently with physical development?

The Committee on Slavery submitted a Report, which became the subject of an earnest and deeply interesting discussion, MONCURE D. CONWAY, DAVID A. WASSON, SAMUEL MYERS, FREDERICK W. EVANS, JAMES HENRY, OLIVER JOHNSON, SAMUEL J. MAY, and WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER, taking part therein. The report was adopted.

The Committee, to whom was referred the paper submitted at a former session, by WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER, recommending the friends of Truth and Progress to meet together on the first day of the week, reported the same in an amended form, when it was adopted.

The Committee on Limiting the Acquisition of Property submitted the following Report, which was accepted for publication, agreeably to the recommendation therein contained. The Committee was also continued till the next Yearly Meeting.

The Committee appointed to consider whether any, and if any, what Limitations ought to be put to the Accumulation of Property in the hands of individuals, as well as corporations, and to suggest laws and other expedients, by which the enormous inequalities among the children of men may be gradually lessened, and hereafter prevented, report, that they have found themselves to be not agreed upon the subject, and, moreover, that they deem it one too intricate, as well as too important, to be hastily disposed of. They, therefore, beg leave to submit the following Interrogatories for the consideration of Progressive Friends during the ensuing year, in order that they may be prepared, at the next Yearly Meeting, to discuss, and adopt or reject, as they may see fit, a Report which your Committee may then be able to present.

1st. All the children of men being endowed by their Creator with a right to life, have they not, therefore, a right to a fair share of the common inheritance—the material elements, upon which the maintenance of life depends ? Have they not an inalienable right to a fair share of the earth's surface, not less than of water, air, light, heat ?

2d. Are not the sunlight, air, water and soil, with the materials in and upon them, and all spontaneous growths, the bountiful gifts of the Creator, to which all men have equal rights ? Can they, then, be legitimately the subjects of property ? Can capital be justly predicated upon them ?

3d. Is not legitimate property something produced by the labor, or invention, of man, operating upon material elements, or in the regions of thought ? And are not such productions the only just basis of capital ?

4th. The chief end of man is not the accumulation of wealth. Ought, then, the chief end of government to be (as it has been declared by an eminent statesman to be) the protection of property ? Ought it not rather to be the improvement of the conditions and characters of all men ?

5th. Should not our laws encourage agriculture more than foreign commerce; because, in the first place, the cultivation of the common heritage, and the gathering of its productions, secured to those who labor for these results a more general enjoyment of the comforts of life; and because, in the second place, foreign commerce cannot be carried on, and great cities be built up to sustain it, without deteriorating the large classes of men, women, and children, on whom the hardships of navigation, and the hand-labor in our cities, devolve ?

6th. Is not the Tariff policy, and every expedient that embarrasses' needful commerce with foreign nations,—is it not a policy that only a patriot, and not a philanthropist, would commend ?

7th. Cannot, and should not, some changes be made in the laws of inheritance, and of the transmission of property, so that the whole of the succeeding generation may be benefited, and wealth not be accumulated in the hands of a few, where it is comparatively useless, if not pernicious, both to the possessors and the community ?

8th. Ought not a stringent law to be passed, by which corporations, that have caused any work to be done, shall be holden to pay those who have done the work, if their agents—the contractors, or sub-contractors—fail to pay them ?

9th. Laws are now enacted in order to limit the usury of money. Should not laws also be enacted to regulate the rents of houses and lands ?

10th. Ought not all lands and buildings used for demoralizing purposes, brothels, dram shops, gambling places, bull baitings, cock fights, horse races, etc., to be forfeited to the community, which they are doing so much to damage, and converted to purposes of education and public enlightenment?

11th. Ought not the necessary expenditures of government to be provided for by *direct taxation*, so that the people may realize what it costs them to be governed, and know why, and for what, so much is expended?

12th. Should not taxes be levied upon a rising scale, so that the millionaire shall pay more for the support of government than a million of men who have not a dollar that they can spare without real discomfort to themselves and families?

13th. Should not the exact amount of properties, owned by corporations or individuals, be faithfully registered, and ought not every kind of property that is withheld, or intentionally undervalued, to be wholly forfeited?

14th. Should not society provide for all its members a thorough education and good business opportunities, so that the children of the poor, as well as the rich, shall be placed on something like an equality in the *start* of life?

SAMUEL J. MAY, MONCURE D. CONWAY, and DAVID A. WASSON being about to leave us, it was proposed to unite with them in singing the following hymn:

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our care.

We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathising tear.

When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.

This glorious hope revives
Our courage by the way,
While each in expectation lives,
And longs to see the day.

From sorrow, toil, and pain,
And sin, we shall be free,
And perfect love and friendship reign
Through all eternity.

SAMUEL J. MAY, MONCURE D. CONWAY, and DAVID A. WASSON then successively took leave of the meeting, each in a few appropriate words, which touched the hearts of all, and drew tears of sympathy and fraternal affection from many.

OLIVER JOHNSON, in order to remove objections made by some persons yesterday to a passage in the paper on Amusements, proposed to amend the same by adding thereto the following words:—"On one point we are fully agreed, viz., that theatres generally, as now conducted, ought not to receive the support of the friends of morality." The amendment was unanimously agreed to.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

MARY A. W. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Woman's Rights, submitted a Report, which, after remarks by WILLIAM LOGAN FISHER, FREDERICK W. EVANS, CHANDLER DARLINGTON, REUBEN WEBB, and WILLIAM BARNARD, was unanimously adopted.

HENRY M. SMITH, from the Committee on Temperance, submitted a Report, which was adopted without discussion.

RUTH DUGDALE, from the Committee on that subject, submitted a Testimony against Tobacco, which, after a deeply interesting discussion by BARTHOLOMEW FUSSELL, JOHN G. JACKSON, REUBEN WEBB, CHANDLER DARLINGTON, ISAAC MEREDITH, JAMES HENRY, ESTHER HAYES, ALICE ELIZA HAMBLETON, MARY L. BARNARD, MARY ANNE W. JOHNSON, EBENEZER JAMES, THOMAS HAMBLETON, BENJAMIN PYLE, J. F. STERN, OLIVER JOHNSON, EUSEBIUS BARNARD, WM. LOGAN FISHER, THOMAS GARRETT, WM. B. ELLIOTT, and THOMAS BORTON, was adopted. The Committee was continued till next year.

On motion of LEA PUSEY, a Committee, consisting of JOHN G. JACKSON, LEA PUSEY, DINAH MENDENHALL, JAMES HENRY, MARY P. WILSON, RUTH DUGDALE, AMELIA JACKSON, PHILENA HEALD, ALICE ELIZA HAMBLETON, MERCY LLOYD, JACOB T. STERN, ANNA PUSEY, THOMAS GARRETT, JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, CARRIE WISE, HENRY M. SMITH and ELEANOR SMITH, was appointed to consider the subject of Spiritualism, to report next year.

ELI LOGAN, WILLIAM BARNARD, and RUTH DUGDALE were appointed a Committee to prepare and circulate a petition to the State Legislature for the Abolition of Capital Punishment.

Epistles, addressed to the Waterloo (N. Y.) and Ohio Yearly Meetings, and to the Friends of Human Progress in North Collins, N. Y., were presented from the Committee appointed for that purpose, and adopted. The Revising Committee were authorized to prepare epistles to the Michigan Yearly Meeting of Friends of Human Progress, to the Wabash Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, and to the meeting of Progressive Friends at Milton, Ulster Co., N. Y.

The following persons were appointed a Committee to revise and publish the proceedings of this, and issue a call for our next Yearly Meeting, viz: JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, RUHANEY WAY, OLIVER JOHNSON, THOMAS GARRETT, HANNAH M. DARLINGTON, ISAAC MENDENHALL, WILLIAM BARNARD, PHILENA HEALD, JOHN G. JACKSON, RUTH DUGDALE, LIZZIE MCFARLAN, FRANKLIN DARLINGTON, HANNAH PENNOCK,

JOSIAH WILSON, DINAH MENDENHALL, SUSANNA CHAMBERS, S. M.
BARNARD, S. A. ENTRIKEN, RACHEL WILSON, AGNES SANDERS.

In closing the deliberations of our Fourth Annual Convocation, we gladly embrace the opportunity afforded us to renew our testimony in favor of the non-theological and non-sectarian basis of our Association, and to declare to the world that our experience has abundantly confirmed us in the conviction expressed at the outset, viz: That a common love of God as the Universal Father, a common love for mankind as one Brotherhood, a common thirst for Truth, a common devotion to the Right, and common aspirations for Personal Purity and Social Well-being, are a far nobler, higher, and stronger bond of Religious Fellowship and Fraternity than any thing that has been or can be found in creeds, confessions of faith, or forms of worship. Differing very widely from one another upon theological points, we have been essentially of one heart and one mind in regard to the great moral issues which, from time to time, have claimed our attention; and this ONENESS OF SPIRIT in respect to the practical duties of life has preserved us from "foolish questions" and "doubtful disputations" and "strifes" of doctrine, and enabled us to labor together, with constantly increasing respect, attachment and affection, for our own edification, comfort and growth, and for the highest welfare of the human race. We are greatly encouraged and strengthened by the indications which greet us on every hand, that the spirit of Progress and Reform is making itself felt, more or less powerfully, in almost every religious denomination; that the bonds of Sect are constantly growing weaker; that Priestcraft and Churchcraft are becoming more and more distasteful and odious in the public estimation; and that multitudes of the most enlightened, earnest and devoted men and women of the age are throwing off the trammels of superstition, bigotry and intolerance, and seeking such forms of religious association as are in accordance with the fundamental laws of human nature, the sovereignty of Conscience, the right of private judgment, and the liberty of thought and speech. Grateful for the measure of success which has attended our efforts hitherto, and cheered by the words of encouragement and hope that greet us on every side, it is our earnest desire that we may be found faithful in time to come, and that the cause of truth and righteousness may go on to a speedy triumph.

Signed in behalf of the Yearly Meeting,

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,
RUHANEY WAY,
OLIVER JOHNSON, }
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EXPOSITION OF SENTIMENTS.

ADOPTED BY THE PENNSYLVANIA YEARLY MEETING OF
PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS.

To the Friends of Pure and undefiled Religion, and to all Seekers after Truth, of whatever name or denomination, the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends sendeth Greeting:

DEAR FRIENDS:—Having been led, as we trust, through obedience to the revelations of truth, to form a Religious Association upon principles always too little regarded and often trampled under foot by professing Christians and popular sects, we are constrained to address you in explanation of our leading sentiments, purposes, plans, and hopes. If, as we believe, the basis of our organization, and the arrangements we propose for the culture of man's religious powers, are in harmony with the Divine laws, and adapted to the wants of human nature and the demands of the present age, it is certainly incumbent upon us to diffuse the knowledge thereof as widely as possible; and if, on the other hand, “the light that is in us be darkness,” it is proper that we should invoke your earnest efforts to redeem us from our errors, and turn our feet into the highway of holiness and truth. We, therefore, ask your serious and unprejudiced consideration of the matters presented in this Exposition, so that, whether you shall accept or reject our propositions, your conclusions may minister to your own peace of mind and growth in the love and practice of the truth.

In our efforts to apply the principles of Christianity to daily life, and to social customs and institutions which we deemed subversive of individual and national morality, as well as in conflict with the laws of God, we encountered the hostility of the popular sects, to one or another of which most of us belonged, and to which we were bound by ties that grew with our growth and strengthened with our strength.

Mingling with the chime of church bells and with the tones of the preacher's voice, or breaking upon the stillness of our religious assemblies, we heard the clank of the slave's chain, the groans of the wounded and dying on the field of bloody strife, the noise of drunken revelry, the sad cry of the widow and the fatherless, and the wail of homeless, despairing poverty, driven

“By foul Oppression's ruffian gluttony
Forth from life's plenteous feast;”

and when, in obedience to the voice of God, speaking through the holiest sympathies and purest impulses of our Godlike humanity, we sought to arouse our countrymen to united efforts for the relief of human suffering, the removal of giant wrongs, the suppression of foul iniquities, we found the Church, in spite of her solemn professions, arrayed against us, blocking up the path of reform with her serried ranks, prostituting her mighty influence to the support of wickedness in high places, smiling complacently upon the haughty oppressor, “justifying the wicked for a reward,” maligning the faithful Abdiels who dared to stand up for the truth and to testify against popular crimes—thus traitorously upsetting the very foundations of the Religion she was sacredly bound to support and exemplify, and doing in the name of Christ deeds at which humanity shuddered, obliterating her indignant blushes only with the tears that welled up from the deeps of her great, loving heart.

For a time, though not without deep mortification and discouragement, we bore this appalling delinquency, thinking in our short-sightedness that it was mainly the result of a temporary mistake, and not of an incurable leprosy tainting the whole body. In the “patience of hope” we toiled on, seeking to reform alike the Church and the world, and deeming it certain that the former would speedily abandon her false and sinful position, and “come up to the help of the Lord” against the hosts of unrighteousness and oppression. Our hopes in this respect were doomed to a sad and bitter disappointment. The leaders of the Church, instead of retracing the false step which they had taken, grew more and more hostile to the cause of Christian Reform, while there was not found in the body enough of moral principle to reject their counsels and repudiate their impious claims to a Divine warrant for their criminal apostacy. Inflated with spiritual pride, and claiming to be the anointed expounders of God's will, they mocked at Philanthropy as no part of religion, exalted in its place the Dagon of man-made Disciplines,

arged obedience to the decisions of Yearly Meetings or other ecclesiastical assemblies, as the sum of human obligation, bade us stifle the gushing sympathies which link us to our kind, and passively "wait God's time" for the removal of the evils that afflict and curse our race; as if God had not revealed his purpose of doing this work by human instrumentality—as if there were times when deeds of charity and mercy are offensive in His sight—as if the cry of suffering Humanity and the emotions it stirs within us were not a sufficient revelation of His will, and we were bound to wait in listless inactivity for some supernatural or miraculous manifestation of His authority and power! Alas! how many have thus waited, until at last the spiritual ear has become too dull and heavy to vibrate under the gentle tones of the "still, small voice," and the heart so hard and cold, that it has ceased to beat at the cry of mortal woe! Superstition has woven around their souls her impenetrable veil, excluding the warm sunlight of God's presence, paralyzing their moral energies, and leaving their holiest sympathies to stagnate for lack of use; thus unfitting them for the work the good Father sets before them in common with all His children, and defeating the great end and purpose of their earthly life.

When we refused to obey the mandate of our ecclesiastical rulers, choosing to hearken to the voice of God rather than unto the voice of man, we found our worst foes in our own religious households; the rod of ecclesiastical power was lifted above our heads, and some of us were made to understand that excommunication was the price to be paid for the exercise of that liberty which Jesus proclaimed as the birthright of his disciples. We might have devoted our energies, to the acquisition of wealth, and, in imitation of the example of many who stood high in the Church, entered into close relations with men devoid of religious principle in the pursuit of that object, and no voice of censure or reproof would have been lifted against us; but when we associated with noble men and women, not of our sect, for the purpose of abolishing slavery, war, intemperance, and other crying abominations, and our zeal for humanity made us indifferent to the *forms* of the Church, though more than ever alive to the great principles she had so long professed to believe and revere, we were treated as offenders; and the strange spectacle was witnessed of bodies, claiming to be God's representatives on earth, excluding from their pale, men and women of blameless lives for loving peace, purity and freedom so devotedly, as to be willing to co-operate with all whose hearts prompted them to labor for the promotion of those heavenly virtues. Thus were the great and en-

nobling principles of our common humanity subordinated to sectarian shibboleths, and that Divine charity, which is the essence of the God-like, and the sum of every virtue in man, narrowed down to the dimensions of a particular creed, or smothered under the petty limitations of speculative theology.

Driven thus to choose between our loyalty to sect and our allegiance to God, and feeling still the need of some outward helps in the cultivation of the religious sentiment, we were naturally led to investigate the whole subject of religious organization, its nature, uses and sphere, and the source and extent of its powers. The result of our inquiries is a clear conviction, that Churches, however high their pretensions of authority derived from God, are only human organizations, and the repositories of only such powers as may have been rightfully conferred upon them by the individuals of whom they are composed, or derived from the laws of our social nature. It is time that this truth, so long obscured by the sorcery of priesthood, were clearly understood and boldly proclaimed. Too long have the common people been deluded with the idea that the Church holds a mysterious *organic* relation to the Infinite,—a relation distinct from that existing between the soul and its Creator, and conferring special powers and prerogatives. Perhaps no error has done more than this to debase and enslave the mind of man, to fetter his godlike powers, and make him the ready instrument of superstition and priesthood. It is the most vicious element of Popery, from which our Protestant sects are not yet delivered. Our religion, which should make us free and self-reliant, willing to bend the knee only to God, as he stands revealed to our own consciousness, withered by the touch of this superstition, becomes, in the hands of ambitious and designing men, the instrument of our degradation, the symbol of littleness, meanness, bigotry and hypocrisy. The Romish Church sets up for herself a claim of absolute infallibility, and the various Protestant sects, professing to deride *her* pretensions, yet tax our credulity scarcely less. From the Episcopal Church, with her imposing ritual and elaborate ceremonials, down to modern Quakerism, with its professed abjuration of all forms, its rustic garb and look of "meek simplicity," all seem deluded with the idea that the Church, being made after a Divine pattern, is supernaturally preserved from error. Even the Quaker regards the decision of his Yearly Meeting with a superstitious reverence scarcely inferior to that which the Catholic awards to the decrees of the Pope and the Cardinals. Do his reason and common sense suggest that the Yearly Meeting has decided erroneously or unjustly, he banishes the thought as little less than im-

pious, becomes silent if not acquiescent, and mayhap lays his reason and common sense a sacrifice on the altar of the Church. Poor man! let him be once fairly convinced that ecclesiastical bodies, however sacred their professions, however worthy of esteem within their legitimate sphere, are yet only *human*, and without authority to bind the conscience ever of the humblest of God's children, and he will no longer dare to offer such a sacrifice, to dishonor his Creator by debasing his own exalted powers.

It would be easy to show that this claim of supernatural power, on the part of the organized Church, is at war with the whole genius and spirit of Christianity as exhibited in the life and teachings of Jesus, and without warrant in the writings of the Apostles and primitive Christians, as well as subversive of individual rights and responsibilities. Jesus nowhere indicated an intention to organize a Church clothed with such power. Indeed, it does not appear from his recorded words that he even contemplated any organization whatever of those who should embrace his doctrines. He specified no such work as incumbent upon those whom he sent forth as witnesses of the truth, but left them to adopt such instrumentalities as might seem to them adapted to promote the object of their mission. The Apostles did indeed organize Churches, but they did not pretend that they were framed after a Divinely prescribed pattern, still less that they were clothed with a supernatural power. "It was not," says a learned writer,* "until the number of personal followers of Jesus increased by thousands, and *the need of some organization began to be felt*, that any thing like the institution of a distinct and permanent religious society appears to have been definitely contemplated. And then *nothing more was done, than was necessary to that present exigency*. Thus the whole institution of the Church, at Jerusalem grew up by degrees, *as one step after another was called for by a succession of circumstances altogether peculiar.*" A religious periodical of high authority in matters of ecclesiastical history, † testified, some years since, as follows: "Men have clung as with a dying grasp to a few shreds of ancient tradition, and deemed it sacrilege to meddle with these consecrated relics. They have attached a peculiar sacredness to their own constitutions, councils, ordinances, creeds and decisions, as if they rested on Divine right and apostolic authority.... The beautiful theories of Church government, devised with so much care and put together with so much skill and art, have, we are sure, no manner of resemblance to the

* Leonard Bacon, in his "Manual for Young Church Members."
† *The Christian Spectator*, Sept., 1833.

Churches mentioned in the Acts and Epistles. The primitive Christians, could they come among us, would be not a little surprised to hear their assemblies, gathered by stealth for worship, with or without particular standing officers, referred to as the models after which the superstructure of denominational Churches is supposed to be fashioned. They were simple-hearted men and women, exposed to continual persecution, and bound together in Christian love; forming and modifying their regulations *exactly as was needed*; never once dreaming that they or their successors were bound to a single system by some great code, provided by Divine authority....The reason of associating together was, to further this great end, mutually to enliven the feelings of devotion, strengthen the principles of piety, and aid in, and urge to, the discharge of duty....Some things were practised in some Churches and not in others. Some officers existed in one and not in another; some met in one place and not in another; and *all had a right to do whatever might be conducive to the general good.*"

We have dwelt at some length on this point, because we deem it of fundamental importance. This claim of organic communion with God lies at the root of many evils in the Churches around us, and hence we desire to make our denial of its validity as emphatic as possible. We would impress upon the minds of all whom our voice may reach, the truth, that there is no mysterious alchemy whereby a company of men, mean and selfish as individuals, are transmuted into a holy body; no Divine afflatus vouchsafed to them in the mass, superseding the necessity of personal conformity to the will of God. Such a claim is the acme of superstition and imposture. It is amazing that it should for so long a period have deceived and befooled the nations! When will the people learn that there is nothing Divine, nothing too sacred for investigation, in the artificial arrangements and prescribed formalities of sects? Alas! what multitudes join the popular Churches, submitting to their rites and paying the expenses of their administration, deluding themselves meanwhile with the idea that they are thus ensuring their eternal salvation, even though their daily lives are defiled by sordid and debasing acts, and they scarcely lift a finger or breathe one honest aspiration for their own or the world's moral improvement!

Our inquiries into the nature and uses of Religious Organization have also brought us to the conclusion, that the Churches around us have made a vital mistake in demanding uniformity of belief in respect to scholastic theology, ordinances, rites and forms, as a condition of religious fellowship and the basis of associated effort. It would hardly be

possible to exaggerate the evils resulting from this mistake. It has led the Church into dissensions, hypocrisy and all uncharitableness, and instead of promoting a manly, vigorous and healthful piety, which ever manifests itself in works of practical benevolence and would make her a burning and a shining light in the presence of surrounding darkness, it narrows the scope of her vision, dwarfs the intellect, smothers the heart, and makes her the purveyor of traditions and shams, a covert for meanness and treachery, and a hiding-place for the perpetrators and apologists of popular wickedness. It reverses the arrangements proposed by Jesus and his early followers, putting that first which should be last, the incidental in place of the primary, the temporary in place of the eternal. Jesus enjoins it upon his hearers to "seek *first* the kingdom of God and His *righteousness* ;" but the popular Church practically tells us, on pain of eternal perdition, to seek first of all the *theology* of that kingdom, assuring us, with impious tongue, that if we only master that, get its different parts properly arranged and labelled, and learn to believe them, however inconsistent with each other, and contrary to our reason and common sense, the *righteousness* may safely enough be left to take care of itself! Instead of requiring as the evidence of our piety the "fruits" demanded in the Gospel of Jesus, it sneers at "good works" as "carnal" and inefficacious, bids us mind our catechisms, disciplines and confessions of faith ; to come regularly to its assemblies, and worship according to its prescribed forms ! It is no wonder that politicians, bent upon schemes of selfish aggrandizement, mock at the Higher Law, and declare their own oppressive statutes a finality, when the Church is found thus corrupt and apostate. No marvel that insatiate Wealth tramples upon lowly Poverty; that War's "red thunders" reverberate round the world ; that Drunkenness counts its victims by tens of thousands ; that Land Monopoly grinds humanity in the dust ; that Lust is doing his work of defilement and shame with impunity ; that immortal beings are driven to their daily toil under the lash, and even sold in the shambles, when the Church proffers absolution for such crimes upon terms so easy of fulfilment.

The natural counterpart of this false and superstitious devotion to creeds and forms is an unnatural sourness and melancholy—a Pharisaical spirit, which frowns upon amusements as an offence to God, and which would cover the face of society with a sanctimonious gloom as repugnant to Religion as to unperverted human nature. The victims of this spirit converse about religion, not in manly and natural tones, indicative of sincerity and earnestness, but in a whining, canting man-

ner, as if it were a burden hard to be borne, but which they reluctantly consent to carry during their mortal life, as the only means of eternal salvation! We are persuaded that the exhibitions of this spirit on the part of the Church have produced incalculable mischief, by exciting the prejudices of the young against *all Religion* as necessarily of an ascetic character, and by placing amusements beyond the pale of Christian influence, thus making them liable to excesses which might otherwise be avoided. The Christian, of all other persons, should not be of a sad countenance, but ever cheerful and hopeful in his demeanor, making the very atmosphere he breathes a witness of the serene joy that dwells in his heart. No false idea of sanctity, no superstitious or fanatical "worry" about his soul, should he ever suffer to make his presence distasteful and unwelcome to the young.

We cannot undertake to particularize all the errors of principle and practice in the popular Churches, which our investigations have revealed to us; but there is one more which we must not pass in silence. We allude to that vicious and despotic feature in the organization of most of them, which, beginning in the subordination of the individual to the local Church, or to Elders, Overseers, or other officers thereof, ends in the subjection of local bodies to some larger assembly or central power. There are, indeed, some Churches which have attempted to abolish this system, but they are still too much bound by usage to practices inconsistent with their theories. Experience, as well as observation, has taught us that local organizations should in the first place be formed upon principles which will offer the best possible safeguard to the equal rights of the individual members, and discourage tyranny, whether of the many or the few; and, in the next place, that they should never allow any other body, however numerous or imposing, to exercise authority over them. The forms of Church organization, instead of being such as are suggested by the ideas of individual freedom and responsibility which pervade the teachings of Jesus, would seem to have been borrowed from anti-Christian and despotic systems of civil government, whereof force is the vital and controlling element. Under such forms, religious tyranny, always difficult of repression, is sure to spring up into a vigorous life. It would be easy to illustrate this truth by a reference to the history of any of those Churches in which the affiliated and subordinating system of government prevails, but the experience of many of our number naturally leads us to point to the Society of Friends as a warning against this lamentable evil. The setting apart of ministers as a distinct order of persons, and for life; the appointment of Elders to sit

in judgment upon the services of the Ministry, and to determine officially what is and what is not inspiration ; the subjection of individual liberty to official dictation ; the subordination of Preparative to Monthly, of Monthly to Quarterly, of Quarterly to Yearly Meetings ; all this affords a covert for despotic authority. It is an arrangement whereby the few are enabled to control the many, and to carry into successful operation their plans for keeping the Church popular with the world, while she is trampling upon her own most vital principles, and obstinately refusing to do the work for which she was originally established. It aggravates, moreover, all the other evils which have crept into the body, and renders the work of reform extremely difficult, if not impossible.

But while we thus earnestly deny the claims of Religious Associations to Divine authority, and maintain that they form no exception to the rule, that "institutions are made for man, not man for institutions," and while we would fearlessly expose all that is wrong in existing Churches, we do not therefore repudiate such associations as necessarily evil. Founded upon right principles, adjusted to the wants of our social nature, within their legitimate sphere as the servants and helpers, not the masters of the soul, as a means and not an end, we esteem them of great importance. It is only when they interpose between our consciences and God, assuming to tell us authoritatively how much and what we must believe, and virtually trampling under foot the right of private judgment, that our manhood prompts us to reject them. The mistakes which men have made in their efforts to realize the benefits of Religious Association, however strange and even preposterous they may appear to us at this advanced period of the world's history, were only the incidents of Humanity imperfectly informed and developed. They should not therefore discourage us, still less lead us into other errors at the opposite extreme. Men have also made great mistakes in science, and in things pertaining to physical life—in astronomy, chemistry, and the mechanic arts, and even in agriculture ; and it would be no more absurd to urge these mistakes as a reason for abandoning all associated effort in such matters, than it would be to allege the similar blunders into which men have fallen in regard to Religion, and the abuses growing out of them, as a reason why we should resist the strong impulse of our nature which prompts us to combine our efforts for the promotion of piety and good morals. Past errors and present imperfections, instead of affording an argument against organization, are only illustrations of its necessity, as a means whereby the strong may help the weak, the highly cultivated soul minister to the edification of those less enlightened,

and social influence become the aid and support of individual virtue. Beavers do not more naturally combine to build their habitations, than men and women, inspired by a common love of God and Humanity, and a common thirst for religious excellence, mingle and combine their individual efforts for the promotion of pure and undefiled religion among themselves and throughout the world.

In forming *The Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends*, we have followed the instincts of our moral and social nature, and acted upon the settled conviction, that such an organization was necessary to our highest efficiency in the work which our Heavenly Father has given us to do. We seek not to diminish, but to intensify, in ourselves the sense of individual responsibility—not to escape from duty, but to aid one another in its performance—to lift up before all who may be influenced by our words or actions a high standard of moral and religious excellence—to commit ourselves before the world as the friends of righteousness and truth, and as under the highest obligations to labor for the redemption of mankind from every form of error and sin.

It has been our honest endeavor to avoid, if possible, the mistakes into which previous organizations have so generally fallen, and especially those radical errors which are pointed out in this address. To this end we have made our association as simple as possible, having done little more than to provide for an annual assembly. We claim for this organization no other powers than such as we ourselves have conferred upon it in consistency with our own and others' individual freedom. We make no draft upon the veneration of our fellow-men for any arrangement that we have adopted, or may adopt hereafter. Veneration is due only to God, and to those eternal principles of Rectitude, Justice and Love, of which He is the embodiment.

We have set forth no forms nor ceremonies; nor have we sought to impose upon ourselves or others a system of doctrinal belief. Such matters we have left where Jesus left them, with the conscience and common sense of the individual. It has been our cherished purpose to restore the union between Religion and Life, and to place works of goodness and mercy far above theological speculations and scholastic subtleties of doctrine. Creed-making is not among the objects of our association. Christianity, as it presents itself to our minds, is too deep, too broad, and too high, to be brought within the cold propositions of the theologian. We should as soon think of bottling up the sunshine for the use of posterity, as of attempting to adjust the free and universal principles taught and exemplified by Jesus of Nazareth to the angles of

a man-made creed. Churches which undertake this impious and impracticable work doom themselves thereby to barrenness and death. Instead of being warmed and animated by that living faith which "works by love" and overcomes the world, they lapse into bigotry and intolerance, and their formularies, having no life in themselves, become at length mere petrifactions, fossil remains of ideas, which, however significant once, have no longer any adaptation to the condition of the race. It is sad to behold a Church, with Christ's name upon its brow, turning away from the wells of immortal truth, and clinging with superstitious pertinacity and veneration to the shell of an ancient creed, or the letter of an ancient Discipline, from which the original soul long since took its flight; swift to frown upon the slightest departure from its forms and theories, but slow to utter a testimony against a popular sin; ever zealous in tithing "mint, anise and cummin," but heavy of step and slow of speech when the great interests of Humanity are at stake.

Our terms of membership are at once simple, practical and catholic. If we may be said to have a test, it is one which applies to the heart and the life, not to the head nor to any of its speculations. Our platform is broad as Humanity, and comprehensive as Truth. We interrogate no man as to his theological belief; we send no Committees to pry into the motives of those who may desire to share the benefits of our Association; but open the door to all who recognize the Equal Brotherhood of the Human Family, without regard to sex, color or condition, and who acknowledge the duty of defining and illustrating their faith in God, not by assent to a creed, but by lives of personal purity, and works of beneficence and charity to mankind. If, by any possibility, there should be found here and there a sincere inquirer after truth, who may not feel himself included in this invitation to membership, we shall still bid him welcome to our assemblies, and listen with patience to whatever his highest convictions may prompt him to offer. We do not seek to bind our Association together by external bands, nor by agreement in theological opinions. Identity of object, oneness of spirit in respect to the practical duties of life, the communion of soul with soul in a common love of the beautiful and true, and a common aspiration after moral excellence,—these are our bond of union; and when these shall die out in our hearts, nothing will remain to hold us together; and those who shall come after us will not be subjected to the trouble of tearing down a great ecclesiastical edifice, constructed by our hands, before they can make provision for the supply of their own religious wants.

The name of our Association is suggestive of its history and principles. As a sign of our adherence to the great moral testimonies which the Society of Friends has so long professed, as well as for historical reasons, we have adopted in part the name chosen by Fox, Penn, and other reformers of a past generation, for the Societies which they founded, and which, we regret to say, have in our day widely departed from the spirit and principles of those illustrious men. The term "*Progressive*" is intended as a recognition of the fact, that our knowledge of truth is limited, and as an indication of an honest purpose on our part to "go on unto perfection," and to avail ourselves from time to time of whatever new light may be shed upon our path. Our meetings are at present conducted very much like those of the Society of Friends, except that they are not ruled by Elders, and that we have among us no privileged class called Ministers. We welcome alike the word of exhortation, the voice of prayer, and the song of praise and thanksgiving, whichever may well up from the "inner fulness" of the devoted heart; and if at any time words shall be uttered that appear to us to savor not of life but of contention and speculation, while we may feel called upon to speak our own sentiments with freedom, we hope not to be found denying the liberty of speech to others. Some may fear that liberty so unrestricted may lead to disorder and confusion, but we are persuaded that gentleness and forbearance are more potent than official dictation, and that the instinctive sense of right and wrong, in the breast of even a misguided and obtrusive man, will afford the best safeguard of propriety and order in our assemblies.

As a Yearly Meeting, we disclaim all disciplinary authority, whether over individual members or local Associations. We shall, from time to time, declare our sentiments on such subjects as may demand our attention; but they will be armed with no other force than that which our moral influence may impart, or which may belong to the nature of truth when earnestly and honestly spoken. It will be our aim to cherish freedom of thought and speech, on every subject relating to man's highest welfare. In saying this, we have no mental reservations to mock the earnest seeker after truth. We have no thunderbolts to launch at those whose perceptions of truth lead them to different conclusions from those of the majority; no edicts of excommunication to scare the soul from its researches; no sanctimonious scowl to dart at him who carries the torch of free inquiry into the very holy of holies. We know of no question too sacred for examination, nor in respect to which human reason should yield to human authority, however ancient or venerable.

Our organization is formed upon such principles, that while the body will not be responsible for the acts of individuals, so, on the other hand, individuals and minorities may avoid responsibility for any acts of the body which they do not approve, by recording their votes against such acts, or, if they think the case demands it, by a protest. It will, moreover, be the right of any individual to withdraw from the Association at any moment, without being required to give reasons for so doing, and without being subjected to censure on the part of the meeting.

Believing that local Associations, similar in their principles and aims to ours, would meet the wants of multitudes at the present day, and that they would be likely to accomplish great good, we hope to see such established in every community where a sufficient number of persons are found ready for the work. The men and women who are engaged in the various moral reforms of the day, and who have become weary of the prevalent sectarianism, might, we believe, gain strength for their special labors by establishing regular meetings on the First day of the week, for mutual edification and improvement, for an interchange of the sympathies growing out of common pursuits and trials, and for the cultivation of their moral and religious powers. The principle of human fraternity would be thereby strengthened among them, and their children be preserved from many unhealthful influences, and prepared to meet the full responsibilities of life in a spirit becoming to the age in which their lot has been cast. Surely, these are objects worthy of our earnest thought and most careful attention. Our province is not that of iconoclasts alone. We must build as well as destroy. If there are evil institutions to be overthrown and pernicious customs to be uprooted, so also is there need of a new social fabric, of which righteousness and peace are to be the foundations. If there are vices to be done away, so also are there virtues to be promoted; if there are corrupt trees to be hewn down and cast into the fire, so also are there plants of godliness to be trained, and flowers of heavenly beauty and fragrance to be nurtured. And in this work we must help each other, not occasionally and incidentally alone, but regularly and systematically. The arrangements for meetings should in every case be adapted to the peculiar wants and tastes of the communities in which they are respectively held, care being taken to keep forms subordinate to works of practical goodness and beneficence. It is neither necessary nor desirable that one meeting should be an exact copy of another. Adhering closely to fundamental principles, there will still be scope for a variety of modes and forms.

The local Associations should do more than hold weekly meetings.

They should regard it a sacred duty to provide for the visitation and help of the poor in their respective neighborhoods, to lend their sympathy and encouragement to such as are borne down under heavy trials, and to afford prompt and efficient aid in every right effort for the promotion of Temperance, Peace, Anti-Slavery, Education, the Equal Rights of Woman, &c.; that thus the public may be convinced that the Religion they seek to diffuse and establish is not an aggregation of mysteries, abstractions, and unmeaning forms, but a Religion for practical, every-day use, whose natural tendency is to fructify the conscience, intensify the sense of moral responsibility, purify and ennoble the aims of men, and thus to make society wiser, better, and happier. Such Associations, moreover, ought to regard it as their special function to cultivate and develope the religious sentiment among their members, and, so far as possible, in the community generally. For this purpose they would do well to establish libraries, in which the works of eminent anti-sectarian writers upon moral, ethical, and religious subjects might become accessible to all classes, especially to the young.

Such Associations would naturally communicate, by letter or otherwise, with the Yearly Meeting, each giving that body the results of its own peculiar experience, and receiving in return the experiences of others, with such suggestions as the Yearly Meeting, upon a careful comparison of the whole, may be qualified to make. The various Yearly Meetings may also strengthen one another's hands by fraternal correspondence and counsel; and thus, without ecclesiastical authority or domination on the part of any, the whole body of believers in practical Christianity throughout the country may be cemented together in Christian love, and prepared to labor in harmony for the redemption of mankind from every evil and false way, and for the establishment of universal righteousness, purity, and peace. A Church thus united would wield a moral power like that of the Apostles and immediate followers of Jesus, and the means by which it would conquer the world are those which an Apostle has described: "BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE, BY LONG-SUFFERING, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BY LOVE UNFEIGNED, BY THE ARMOR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ON THE RIGHT HAND AND ON THE LEFT."

Dear Friends! are these ideas of a Church Utopian? Are we dreamers and enthusiasts? or is the day foretold by ancient prophets and bards beginning to dawn upon our darkness and to light the dull horizon with its revivifying rays? Are we always to walk amid shadows and shams? Do we not hear the voice of God speaking to us in the deep

silence of our souls, and uttering itself in the events that are passing before us, bidding us awake from our slumbers, to cast away our doubts, and purify ourselves for the work of building up a pure Christianity upon the earth? Are not the fields every where white unto the harvest? and are there not all around us men and women, whose hearts God hath touched with holy fire, and who stand ready to enlist with us in this glorious cause? Let us, then, not falter, nor hesitate. What if our numbers are few, and the hosts of superstition and sin stand before us in menacing array? What are their boasts to us, when we know that the truth we promulgate is "a part of the celestial machinery of God," and that, "whoso puts that machinery in gear for mankind hath the Almighty to turn his wheel?"

"O, brother man! fold to thy heart thy brother;
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;
To worship rightly, is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

"Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of Him whose holy work was 'doing good';
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

"Then shall all shackles fall; the stormy plangor
Of wild war music o'er the earth shall cease;
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace."

Signed on behalf and by direction of the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, held at Old Kennett, Chester County, by adjournments, from the 22d to the 25th of Fifth Month, 1853.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, } Clerks.
SIDNEY PEIRCE,

Our friend, JOSEPH A. DUGDALE, being present with us, the truthful and luminous Exposition of Sentiments put forth by the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, recently held at "Old Kennett," Chester County, was presented and read. The magnitude and importance of the principles embraced, and their appositeness to the present wants of society, were deeply felt; and this meeting earnestly recommends to its members their co-operation in the circulation of the document.

Signed by direction of the Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, held in Waterloo, Seneca County, N. Y., from the 5th to the 7th of the Sixth month, inclusive, 1858.

THOMAS MCCLINTOCK, } Clerks.
RHODA DE GARMON,

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Testimonies.

I. AMUSEMENTS—THEIR USES AND ABUSES

AMUSEMENTS are rarely spoken of in religious assemblies, except to be deprecated and denounced. The sects, with scarcely an exception, regard them with a suspicious and unfriendly eye, as beneath the dignity of man, at war with piety, and perilous to the soul. Against them preachers and elders lift up their warning voice, ecclesiastical convocations proclaim an undying hostility, Tract Societies utter their solemn dehortations, and religious periodicals swell the voice of rebuke and condemnation. The American Church, which can see no crime in selling the image of God in the shambles, and even finds in the New Testament a charter for bondage and a benediction for the slave-hunter, frowns upon the dance as an offence to Christianity and a sin against God !

Whence arises this hostility to amusements ? Is it founded in reason, or is it, like many other prevailing ideas and customs, the result of a misconception of the nature of man and of religion ? The question, whichever way it may be answered, is one of great practical importance, and deserves the serious attention of a Religious Society, organized avowedly on the principle of progress, professing allegiance to no creed or custom of the past, but to follow with reverent step the light of Truth, whithersoever it may lead the way. If amusements are sinful, tending to undermine the foundations of religion and good morals, the Progressive Friends should promptly unite with other religious bodies in discountenancing them. If, on the other hand, they are not only innocent in themselves, but conducive to man's happiness and normal development, we ought to encourage them among ourselves, and labor in all proper ways to avert from them the hostility of others.

That there is in human nature a fondness for amusements, a conscious want which nothing else can supply, will not, we think, be

denied. This want is manifested in our earliest infancy; it is imperious in its cravings during the period of youth,

"When, like a fountain sparkling from the earth,
Bursts bubbling from the breast the melody of mirth;"

it is deeply felt when the labors, perplexities and disappointments of adult life severely task our powers; and, however sternly its pleadings may have been repressed or denied, it never quite dies out even in old age, or in the height of one's religiousness.* On this point we may confidently appeal to universal experience and observation. What shall we say then? Shall we affirm that this want was implanted in us by our beneficent Creator to mock and tantalize us? Might we not as rationally conclude that the love of society, the thirst for knowledge, or any other natural desire, whether of the mind or the body, was designed, not to minister to our enjoyment through its gratification, but only to develop within us the power of self-denial? What impiety—nay, what infidelity—is involved in this impeachment of the Divine wisdom and goodness! When shall we comprehend the full significance of the truth, that we are the offspring of the living God, and created in his image and likeness? When shall we learn that his will concerning us is expressed in the nature he has given us; that every normal want of mind or body is an infallible revelation of a Divine law—a revelation transcending the authority of any creed, tradition or parchment, however sacred or venerable? In the practical concerns of life, how often is this only authoritative revelation set at naught! Institutions and customs are adjudged to be right or wrong, not in the light of this primary and fundamental test, but according to their conformity, or want of conformity, to the arbitrary maxims of a conventional morality, or to the dogmas and traditions of a benighted and degenerate Church. Taught in the school of a false theology to regard human nature as "carnal" and "depraved," we stifle her voice in the din and clatter of conflicting creeds, dis honoring our immortal birthright by unmanly subserviency to precepts and usages, begotten of ignorance and superstition and enforced by fear. With atheistic infatuation we avert our eyes from the light that streams into our minds and hearts from the Sun of Righteousness, and glows with a Divine effulgence in every part even of our physical organism, and, in the bewilderment that follows, we surrender ourselves to the guidance of a priesthood arrogant and presumptuous, and without illumination save from "sparks of their own kindling."

We assert with confidence that the prejudice which places amuse-

* It is somewhere stated that even John Calvin was wont, after preaching on Sunday, to go into a field near his house, and recreate himself by pitching quoits with some of his fellows.

ments in the list of things forbidden, has its root in the asceticism which disfigures the popular faith, and which, instead of giving scope for the normal activity of all the elements of human nature, puts one class of our faculties under sentence of outlawry, and teaches us to employ another class, no whit more Divine, in waging against them a fratricidal and exterminating war. In this unnatural, and therefore impious conflict, we disturb the healthful balance of our powers, and carry disorder and confusion into all the arrangements of society. The mind, thus violently restricted in one direction and cruelly perverted in another, becomes too often the prey of morbid sensibility and malign passion. Thus is life poisoned at the fountain—thus are all its sweetest juices turned into gall. Piety, which should be the redolence of a character developed into every manly excellence—a crown of joy, winning the heart of every wanderer from God's fold by its all-satisfying loveliness and beauty—blighted by asceticism, becomes a hideous spectre, grotesque, sepulchral and fantastic—its song an unnatural whine, its voice a menacing growl, appealing only to our fears.

The piety inculcated by Jesus is not, as many seem to suppose, a fanatical ecstasy over the mutilation or destruction of a part of our faculties, but the efflorescence of our *whole* nature, harmoniously developed, every faculty of mind, body and soul active according to its own special law, and contributing something to the flower, without which its form were less perfect, its hue less heavenly, its fragrance less divine. It is not by "fasts and forms, and ostentatious self-impositions" and scourgings, that we can hope to win the favor of God, but by a cheerful obedience to the laws of our nature, by lives consecrated to purity and truth. To fit ourselves for heaven it is not necessary to make ourselves uncomfortable on earth; for "godliness hath the promise of this life as well as of that which is to come," giving us "a thousand fold" in the one, and "everlasting" joys in the other. Religion rightly understood, does not contract, but enlarge our capacity for earthly enjoyment, imparting a more exquisite relish to every pleasure of mind and sense. It was not designed to make us sorrowful, melancholy and cadaverous, but round-faced, happy and joyful. A modern writer,* as eminent for his piety as for his intellectual attainments, has illustrated this point with such striking clearness and beauty, that we cannot forbear to quote his words.

"To some, perhaps to many, religion and amusement seem mutually hostile, and he who pleads for the one may fall under suspicion

of unfaithfulness to the other. But to fight against our nature is not to serve the cause of sound morals. God, who gave us our nature, who has constituted body and mind incapable of continued effort, who has implanted a strong desire for recreation after labor, who has made us for smiles much more than for tears, who has made laughter the most contagious of all sounds, whose Son hallowed a marriage-feast by his presence and sympathy, who has sent the child fresh from his creating hand to develop its nature by active sports, and who has endowed both young and old with a keen susceptibility of enjoyment from wit and humor—He, who thus formed us, cannot have intended us for a dull, monotonous life, and cannot frown on pleasures which solace our fatigue and refresh our spirits for coming toils. It is not only possible to reconcile amusement with duty, but to make it the means of more animated exertion, more faithful attachments, more grateful piety. True religion is at once authoritative and benign. It calls us to suffer, to die, rather than swerve a hair's-breadth from what God enjoins as right and good; but it teaches us that it is right and good, in ordinary circumstances, to unite relaxation with toil, to accept God's gifts with cheerfulness, and to lighten the heart, in the intervals of exertion, by social pleasures."

The evils which result from placing the joyous elements of human nature under the ban of religion, and subjecting mankind to unnatural and artificial restraints, are so multifarious that a volume would scarcely suffice for their delineation. On the one hand, it takes from religion its softening and humanizing features, leading inevitably to bigotry, intolerance, and persecution; and on the other, by divorcing amusements from the legitimate and wholesome restraints of religion, it leads to mischievous abuses. If we have religion without amusements, we must also have amusements without religion, the one being the natural counterpart of the other; and it is difficult to say on which side the evils of this unnatural divorce are most deeply felt. That asceticism, by proscribing social pleasures, exerts a hardening and dehumanizing influence is seen in the indisputable fact, that ascetics, in every age of the world, have been distinguished for an intolerant and persecuting spirit. The ancient Scribes and Pharisees were the first sect of ascetics (unless we except the Hindoos) of whom history gives us any distinct account. They frowned upon the innocent pastimes of the nation to which they belonged, and were exceedingly punctilious in ritual observances, fasts, and mortifications; but they devoured widows' houses, and conspired together with malignant hate to crucify the prophet of Nazareth and persecute his

faithful followers even unto death. The Inquisition, with all its inhuman paraphernalia of torture, whence came it? From men who accepted with thankfulness the natural bounties of Providence and found delight in social refinements and joys? No, but from those who taught that religion was at deadly feud with nature, and that amusements were heinous sins, a contrivance of the devil to lure souls to eternal perdition. And in more modern times it will be found that religious intolerance and persecution have marked the career of sects just in proportion as the spirit of asceticism has mingled with their faith. The most "gloomy-browed" sects exhibit least of the spirit of humanity, are always the most zealous in proscribing and vexing those whom they esteem as heretics, and the last to yield anything to the spirit of progress. The gallows and the Fugitive Slave law find the most bitter and unscrupulous advocates among those who take the lead in placing the seal of condemnation upon "worldly amusements." The slave-hunt wakens hardly a throb of virtuous indignation in their bosoms; the spectacle of a mother returning manacled to the bondage which she dreads worse than death-starts in them no tear of sympathy, rouses them to no protest, no denunciation; but show them a company of men and maidens, or merry-voiced and rosy-cheeked children, moving joyously in the dance, and forth-with a scowl is on their brows and earnest dehortations leap from their tongues!

From a religion so revolting to their noblest instincts the young turn away in perplexity and disgust, and, in the absence of that healthful restraint which a purer faith would supply, they too often resort to amusements vicious in themselves, or that have been made so through unnecessary abuses. Parental influence, working constantly in the face of an imperious and unsatisfied natural want, soon loses its power over the conscience; and the child, finding home a place of irksome restrictions, seeks in the society of jovial and thoughtless persons, perhaps amidst the allurements of vice and dissipation, the social pleasures he so earnestly craves. It is in this way chiefly that the very name of amusements becomes a terror to serious and well-meaning but misguided parents, in almost every village and neighborhood. The young, on the one hand, are repelled from religion as a yoke irksome to be borne; on the other, parents and guardians shrink from social pleasures as from a pestilence, on account of abuses which themselves have caused; and thus the two classes, instead of being drawn to each other by mutual sympathy, reciprocal affection, and tender confidence, are sundered by constantly recurring debates and contentions. As parents are mainly responsible for these

lamentable results, so also is the remedy in their own hands. Let them no longer dishonor religion by setting it in impotent array against nature. Accepting as for ever settled the fact that God has implanted in the young a thirst for amusements, which cannot and ought not to be extinguished, let them make suitable provision for its indulgence under the paternal roof, amidst the sacred associations of home, and in the society of the pure, the refined, and the good. In the progress of this important work, they will no doubt encounter perplexities and difficulties that will seriously try their patience and awaken their deepest anxiety. A mistake so radical as that which we have endeavored to expose, and which has been fortified by centuries of false teaching, cannot be corrected in a day or a year, nor even in a generation. But let them not be discouraged, nor doubt for a moment the final result. Sooner or later they will reap the fruits of their perseverance in the sweet familiarity, the warm attachment, and the loving confidence of their children, and in the beautiful unfolding of their religious nature.

Having shown, we hope conclusively, that amusements, in some form, are natural and necessary, and that the prevailing hostility thereto arises from false ideas of the nature of man and of religion, we come next to consider the question, How shall we distinguish between amusements whose moral influence is good, and those which are of an opposite character; and what are the best safeguards against the abuses to which the former must ever be liable? The solution of this problem, we frankly confess, is not free from difficulties demanding conscientious care and wise discrimination. Of course it is not possible to set forth in statistical form, and in separate tables, both these classes of amusements. So much depends upon time, place, the state of society, and other circumstances, that we can only lay down certain fundamental principles, leaving them to be applied by individuals and communities, according to their own judgment, in view of their peculiar situation and wants.

In the first place, it is obvious that amusements ought always to be held subordinate to the great end of human existence—viz., the development of a pure, elevated, and noble CHARACTER. The dominant tone of our life should unquestionably be earnest, and even serious; but general seriousness is not incompatible with habitual cheerfulness, nor even with occasional periods of hilarity; without these, indeed, it is itself liable to be carried to excess. The mind was not ordained to be always in the same mood, nor the slave of any single faculty. Even the religious faculties may be, and often are, over taxed and thereby impaired. The sense of duty and responsibility

without which society would sink into moral chaos, may be too intensely stimulated and even ruinously overstrained. Nothing, indeed, is more liable to lead to insanity than a morbidly susceptible conscience. Still, there is need of caution on the other side, lest amusements should occupy too much of our time and attention, and thereby lead us to forget important duties. Says an able writer,* "Amusement is not rightfully the business of any one's life. It should be no one's principal occupation. The moment it is made so it becomes perverted—it is abused. It should be regarded as the spice of life—not its staple food." There are multitudes who have fallen into this error, whose principal object, apparently, is to "kill time." Life to them is consecrated by no great and noble purpose, no lofty aim. Empty-headed and frivolous idlers! they long for new excitement as a spoiled child pines for confectionery. It were more charitable to furnish this class with *work* than with amusements. These are they whom Paul so graphically describes—"lovers of pleasure *more* than lovers of God." Solomon, in that remarkable passage, so often quoted by the clergy, and which, no doubt, has been the text for thousands of ascetic sermons, has indicated the point beyond which amusements should never be carried—viz., the point where they are liable to make us forget our moral accountability. How striking are his words! "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes." And having thus recognized the truth that amusements are natural and proper for the young, he adds the timely caution—"But know thou that for all these things" [as for every thing else] "God will bring thee into judgment." In other words, "Do not forget in your hours of mirth that you are responsible beings, and that life should be devoted to a great purpose." To interpret these words as a menace and a sarcasm is to do violence to their obvious meaning and spirit.

We observe, in the next place, that any form of amusement, the obvious tendency of which, even in the smallest degree, is to diminish the power of conscience, to corrupt the moral feelings, to inflame and bewilder the imagination, to becloud the reason, to free the passions from wholesome restraint, to diminish the reverence for justice and truth, to excite a spirit of cruelty or revenge, to promote or foster the taste for intoxicating drinks, or for tobacco in any of its forms, or to make us indifferent to the obligations and claims of our common humanity, ought not only to be scrupulously avoided, but earnestly opposed. "Any amusement," says the writer[†] whom we just

* Adin Ballou. Christian Socialism, p. 251.

† Adin Ballou.

quoted, "from the enjoyment of which we cannot conscientiously retire with the conviction that, on the whole, it has done us good, ought to be immediately eschewed. If it promote innocent mirth and cheerfulness, or otherwise conduce to the improved health of the physical and intellectual powers, without injuring the moral character, it is an innocent and commendable amusement. If it have the contrary effect, it is at best more or less a pernicious one, however fashionable, specious, or captivating."

It is implied in what we have already said, that amusements should be strictly conformed to the laws of health; and yet the point is one of so much importance as to deserve a distinct and emphatic mention. When they are of such a kind as to lead inevitably to imprudence in dress, or so arranged as to infringe upon the time allotted to sleep, or when they require us to remain for hours in overcrowded and ill-ventilated rooms, they do us a serious injury. On this branch of the subject we are constrained to speak in tones of earnest remonstrance and impressive warning. Great numbers sacrifice health and even life to the ignorance or carelessness which leads them to disregard the laws of their physical organism in the pursuit of pleasure.

The best safeguard, probably, against any or all the abuses to which amusements are liable, would be such an arrangement as should bring together for their enjoyment persons of both sexes and of every age, from the gray-haired grandsire to the prattling child, not, except on rare occasions, in great crowds, and in public places, but around the family hearth, in circles embracing our kindred, and our immediate neighbors and friends. The author of an excellent work on amusements*—the only one on that subject that we have been able to find—well observes: "The natural and only safe mode of enjoying amusements is in common. Where one sex, or any one particular class, enjoy their amusements alone, they are sure to run into excess.....The division of the human family into man, woman and child, father, mother' brother and sister, is the only conservative principle of society; they act and re-act upon each other like the different seasons upon the earth. Each age and each sex has its peculiar characteristics, that serve to modify and check certain mischievous tendencies in the other sex and in others of different ages.For one sex to attempt to amuse themselves agreeably and innocently alone, is like trying to make music on a one-stringed instrument; it has about it a sameness that is tedious and annoying.....The union of the aged with the young, the fair with the manly, in our diversions, brings every source of social improvement and enjoy-

* Plea for Amusements, by Frederic W. Sawyer. New York: Appleton & Co., 1847.

ment together—age with its gravity and experience, mid-life with its energy and its cares, and youth with its vivacity and its hopes.... Is it right for the aged to censure and discourage the innocent amusements of the young, merely because they fear that they may be carried to excess, when, by presiding at those diversions, they can effectually prevent it?"

In the light of the principles now stated, let us consider briefly three special forms or sources of amusement, the general prevalence of which forces them upon our attention, and which, in view of their importance and the diversity of opinion that they have caused, we could not avoid without imputations upon our frankness if not upon our courage.

1. *Music*.—The Quakers, we believe, are the only class among us who deny or doubt that the capacity for making music, and the susceptibility to enjoyment through it, is the gift of God to man; not to be despised and stifled, but gratefully accepted and cultivated. The early Friends found music so intermixed with the superstitious formalities of a corrupt Church, and so perverted by frivolity and passion, that they mistook it for an evil; and the Quakers of the present day are hugging with blind pertinacity the mistake of their fathers. Would to God that they clung with equal tenacity to the great radical truths enunciated by the founders of their Society!

We have never read or listened to any thing in the form of an argument against music that would not have been equally good if urged against literature, eloquence, conversation, or even speech itself, all which are constantly and hourly employed in the service of falsehood, oppression, and crime. Is eloquence a sin, because it is often used to excite prejudice or rouse malignant passion? Shall the preacher cease to lift up his voice in behalf of virtue and truth, because the politician and the warrior use the same Divine faculty to serve their ends? Are speech and conversation to be proscribed and the human family condemned to perpetual taciturnity, because multitudes make their tongues the vehicles of slander and defamation? No more is music to be ranked among things forbidden, merely because it is perverted by the thoughtless reveller, or made to do service on the field of battle.

Music is the delight of children. It soothes them in moments of fretfulness and passion, it diverts them in hours of suffering and pain. Even Quaker mothers know by experience the magic potency of the cradle-song. In after life it has great power over man's emotional nature. Every feeling of joy or grief may be poured forth in song. Every noble sentiment or emotion that swells the

human breast finds a natural outlet in musical tones. There is no more inspiring stimulus for man's highest faculties, nothing better adapted to raise him above all that is low and grovelling than the delights of music, especially when they mingle with or flow through the charmed language of poetry. If any one doubts that music may be made a means of elevating human nature, let him observe the effect of a song, set to fitting words, upon the inmates of a prison. Let him note the evidences of sorrow for weakness and sin, the kindling of hope in place of despair, the resuscitation of long-buried associations of home and kindred, and the exhibitions of gentleness instead of passion, that may thus be produced, and surely he will doubt no more. "I am no musician," says Channing, "and want a good ear, and yet I am conscious of a power in music which I want words to describe. It touches chords, reaches depths in the soul, which lie beyond all other influences, extends my consciousness, and sometimes gives me a pleasure which I have found in nothing else."

We do not hesitate to advise parents to cultivate in their children the faculty of music. It is the gift of a beneficent Creator, and, like the faculty of speech, it should be trained and developed, not alone for purposes of amusement, but as a potent instrumentality in the work of human progress and elevation. It should minister joy at every fireside, it should solace us in affliction, it should comfort us in sickness, it should cement our friendships, and lighten our daily toils. If there is on earth any scene that can give us a foretaste of heavenly bliss, it is that of a household whose refined sympathies, affluent affections, and world-embracing love, find daily expression in melodious song!

2. *Dancing.*—The prejudice against this form of amusement, in the minds of serious persons, is exceedingly strong, having been fostered by abuses of long standing, which must be admitted to be exceedingly pernicious in their effects. But we must discriminate between the amusement itself and those abuses which do not necessarily grow out of it. The most inveterate opponents of dancing at the present day are found among those most strict in their veneration for the authority of the Scriptures. They believe that the Jews received their social, political, and religious institutions through the direct inspiration of God, and not a few of them profess to find in the system of Jewish servitude a Divine warrant for the chattel slavery of the present day. How, then, can they reconcile their hostility to dancing with the admitted fact, that the custom was intermingled not only with the social habits, but even the religious rites of the Jews, "the peculiar people of God?" The escape of the

Israelites from Egyptian bondage, how was it celebrated? By fasting and prayer? Nay, but by festive rejoicing and boundless exultation; Miriam, the prophetess, and sister of Aaron, leading out "all the women," who followed her "with timbrels and with dances." Solomon tells us, with whatever of inspiration belonged to him, that "there is a time to dance;" the Hebrew Psalmist, whose words thrill the devotions of all Christendom, exhorts us to "praise God in the dance;" and even Jesus, in the deeply affecting parable of the Prodigal Son, finds an illustration of the joy that reigns in heaven, when an erring soul returns from its wanderings, in the "music and dancing," and "merry-making" with which the prodigal was welcomed by his family and kindred.

Nearly twenty years ago, that truly enlightened and morally brave man, WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, in considering the means best adapted to diminish the temptations to intemperance, spoke with earnest eloquence of the importance of furnishing the people with "the means of innocent pleasure;" and prominent among the pleasures which he regarded as innocent was dancing. The views which he expressed are at once so just, discriminating and wise, that we cannot forbear to quote his words.

"Dancing is an amusement which has been discouraged in our country by many of the best people, and not without reason. Dancing is associated in their minds with balls; and this is one of the worst forms of social pleasure. The time consumed in preparation for a ball, the waste of thought upon it, the extravagance of dress, the late hours, the exhaustion of strength, the exposure of health, and the languor of the succeeding day—these, and other evils, connected with this amusement, are strong reasons for banishing it from the community. But dancing ought not, therefore, to be proscribed. On the contrary, balls should be discouraged—for this, among other reasons, that dancing, instead of being a rare pleasure, requiring elaborate preparation, may become an every-day amusement, and may mix with our common intercourse. This exercise is among the most healthful. The body as well as the mind feels its gladdening influence. No amusement seems more to have a foundation in our nature.....It is to be desired, that dancing should become too common among us to be made the object of special preparation as in the ball; that members of the same family, when confined by unfavorable weather, should recur to it for exercise and exhilaration; that branches of the same family should enliven in this way their occasional meetings; that it should fill up an hour in all

the assemblages for relaxation in which the young form a part."*

3. *The Drama.*—Of this form of amusement it becomes us to speak with greater reserve, inasmuch as many, perhaps a majority, of our number have had but a very limited opportunity to investigate the facts and weigh the principles in the light of which alone a sound judgment can be formed. Many of us have heretofore shared, in a greater or less degree, the sentiment which has long prevailed among serious-minded persons of almost every class, that the theatre was hopelessly identified with various immoralities; while others, having given the subject a somewhat careful consideration, are of the opinion that it not only ought to be, but may be reformed, and made the ally of virtue and religion. We know that in France and Spain the theatre had its origin in exhibitions intended to impress upon the people the great facts of religious history, and the leading doctrines of Christianity, as anciently understood; but like Christianity itself, it was soon perverted. Conceding that, as hitherto conducted, its influence has been, in many respects, exceedingly pernicious, many enlightened persons yet believe that, as the taste for dramatic representation is deeply imbedded in human nature, the effort to destroy the institution must necessarily fail, while the same energy and zeal, if directed to the reform of those abuses which have given it so bad a name, would be attended with marked success. They affirm that, in some places, this reform has actually begun; that many theatres have ceased to offer facilities for intemperance and licentiousness; that the plays now most frequently on the stage are far less objectionable than those of former years, and that managers are showing a disposition to cater to the tastes and convictions of the refined and the good. As proof of this they point to the fact, that dramas intended to depict the evils of intemperance, and win men to habits of industry and sobriety, or to set in striking array the deformities and crimes of slavery in contrast with the beauties of freedom, have been represented in some theatres with the happiest moral results. "Uncle Tom's Cabin," they tell us, has been played for weeks and months together, in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, drawing immense crowds, and thus presenting anti-slavery truth, in the most impressive manner, to thousands who were not likely to hear it in any other place. It is alleged by intelligent persons that the spirit of mobocracy in New York and Philadelphia was sensibly checked by this means, and the tone of public sentiment greatly changed for the better. If this is so, it certainly affords reasonable ground for doubt whether it is

wise to wage an indiscriminate war upon the theatre. The whole subject should be candidly and carefully considered in the light of the principles above laid down. Opinions, upon a matter of so much consequence, should be cautiously formed, and based, not upon prejudice, but upon the clearest deductions of fact and philosophy. We must be careful, on the one hand, to give no countenance to immorality, and, on the other, not to confound an institution that may perchance be right in itself, with the incidental abuses which have grown up around it. On one point we are fully agreed, viz.: That theatres generally, as now conducted, ought not to receive the support of the friends of morality.

Besides the three forms of amusement already considered, there are others, of no small importance, of which we should be glad to speak, but the limits of this paper forbid. For the most part, however, they are of such a character that they stand in far less need of discussion, at this time, than those upon which we have dwelt; and besides, our object is rather to unfold the PRINCIPLES which should guide us in the choice of our amusements, and to indicate the SPIRIT which should, under all circumstances, pervade them, than to enter upon details, which, however interesting, may safely be referred to the judgment of individuals and communities, when once those principles are understood. We might speak of *Holidays*—the Fourth of July, New Year's Day, Harvest Home, Christmas, etc.—their uses and the proper mode of their observance; of Pic-Nics, to promote temperance, anti-slavery, or some other philanthropic or social object—now so common among us, and which, on the whole, have been found to be exceedingly pleasant and useful; and of those more private gatherings, where relatives or friends come together—it may be upon the birth-day of some dearly loved boy or maiden, the anniversary of a wedding, fragrant with holiest reminiscences, or of some other thrilling event of domestic life—to strengthen those ties of kindred, family, home and neighborhood, which are not only the sources of our purest earthly joy, but the Divinely conservative power of human society. We might speak, too, of intellectual culture, which, in whatever field of science, literature or art, it may be pursued, opens at every step sources of amusement at once elevated, refined, and inexhaustible. We might rejoice in the multiplication of lyceums, which offer a healthful stimulus not only to the intellect but to the social feelings; and also in the institution of libraries in our villages and neighborhoods, by means of which good books are made accessible to all classes, the mists of ignorance and prejudice dispelled, and society redeemed from the blighting influence of gossip, tale-bearing

and detraction, and bound together by ties of amity, affection, and good-fellowship. These are fruitful and inviting themes, but these brief allusions must suffice.

We have now uttered our convictions frankly, earnestly, sincerely. That they are altogether free from error or mistake it would not become us to affirm; but we may say that truth has been our object, the highest welfare of humanity our end and aim. God forbid that, in our anxiety to sever the unnatural connection between religion and asceticism, we should even seem, for a moment, to offer a license to sensual pleasure, unseemly levity, scoffing irreverence, or untimely mirth. In our efforts to deliver mankind from the indurating power of superstition and fanaticism, we would not make them triflers, forgetful of their immortal destiny, unmindful that they were

— “made of Angel form, erect,
To hold communion with the heavens above.”

Such a result indeed would overwhelm us with sorrow and alarm. If we believed that such a calamity would follow this plea for amusements, nothing could tempt us to set thereto our hand and seal. No, no—it is not to make men less religious, less reverential, less devoted, in the legitimate sense of those terms, that we claim for social pleasures the place in our daily life which a beneficent Creator evidently intended that they should fill. On the contrary, we would augment the power of piety by associating it with all that is bright, animating, hopeful and joyous, thus making it lovely and attractive in all eyes; while we would insure the greatest possible amount of happiness from amusements, and guard them against all abuses by tempering them with the chastening and purifying influences of religion. Animated by this spirit, we submit to the world these, our cherished convictions, confident that they will commend themselves to the enlightened judgment of many earnest advocates of truth and progress, and hoping that they may exert some humble influence in promoting a much needed reform.

Signed by direction of the Yearly Meeting, Fifth month, 20th, 1856.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,
RUHANEY WAY,
OLIVER JOHNSON, } Clerks.

Subsequently approved by the Waterloo Yearly Meeting of Friends of Human Progress.

THOS. MCCLINTOCK, } Clerks.
MARY DOTY,

*** The above TESTIMONY in favor of AMUSEMENTS is published as a Tract by OLIVER JOHNSON, 188 Nassau St., New York. Price, 8 cents single; \$3 per hundred.

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II. SLAVERY.

ONCE more, in obedience to the Apostolic injunction, "Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them," we lift up our united voice against that gigantic system of robbery and wrong, American Slavery, by which nearly four millions of human beings, immortal children of God like ourselves, are reduced to a level with four-footed beasts, compelled to toil without wages, often scourged and lacerated by savage-hearted masters or overseers, separated from their dearest kindred and sold as chattels, and, what is far worse than any act of physical cruelty, deprived of the means of intellectual and moral culture, and doomed to gross ignorance and degradation, in a land calling itself Christian and boasting of its civilization, refinement and humanity! The bodily tortures endured by the slaves are indeed enough to awaken profound sympathy and excite an intense indignation; but, oh! how much more appalling is the violence done to those higher faculties, through which they are allied to God and made heirs to an immortal life!

"Woe for those

Who trample o'er a mind, that deathless thing!
 They know not what they do, nor what they deal with.
 Man, perchance, may bind the flower his step hath bruised,
 Or light anew the torch he quenches,
 Or to music wind again the lyre-string
 From his touch that flew. But for the Soul!
 Oh! tremble, and beware to lay rude hands
 Upon God's mysteries there!"

Our hearts are touched when we reflect, that since our last meeting, more than one hundred thousand new victims have been born to this dreadful inheritance of cruelty, degradation and shame, while tens of thousands of others have found a refuge therefrom only in the grave! We cannot find language to express our sense of the deep criminality of slavery, and of the terrible guilt incurred, not only by the slaveholders, but by all those who in any way support or countenance the system, or even neglect to testify against it. In such a case, silence itself is a crime. What, then, shall we say of those who not only refuse to plead the cause of the oppressed, but cast all their influence on the side of the oppressor, pleading in his behalf the sacredness of Laws and Constitutions, weaving apologies for him out of the Bible, and justifying him in the name of Jesus and his Apostles? In what language shall we describe the Church which lends its whole strength to the spoilers of humanity, which permits slavery to nestle securely in its holiest places, and consoles the kidnapper with its sacerdotal benedictions? The garments of the American Church are steeped in blood; her altars are the chief bulwarks of slavery; her communion-tables the refuge of the slave-hunter; her ministers forgers of fetters and apologists for sin; her moral philosophy corrupt; her prayers hypocritical; her worship idolatrous; her solemn assemblies and

ceremonies a sham. To her God speaks in the language addressed to the rulers of ancient Sodom : " Bring no more vain oblations : incense is an abomination unto me ; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with ; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting."

We believe, with Albert Barnes, that slavery could not live outside of the American Church, if it had no foothold within its pale ; and we also believe that any form of anti-slavery which shrinks from denouncing the religion of that Church as false and spurious, must necessarily be weak and inefficient. In dealing with such a sin as slavery, we can adopt no half-way measures. The whole truth must be proclaimed, " without concealment and without compromise." No Church, no Government, no Constitution, no Union, which requires us to support or sanction such a crime, can have any binding force upon our consciences. We seek not alone to prevent the *extension* of slavery, but to exterminate it from every part of the land ; and in this work we must be no respecters of persons, but faithful ever to our highest convictions, consenting to no truce with the enemies of freedom, but loyal always to Justice, Humanity and Truth.

We rejoice to believe that the anti-slavery cause, in spite of all the obstacles it has encountered, has made great progress. The "little cloud, like unto a man's hand," which twenty-five years ago was seen to be ascending above the moral horizon, has expanded over the whole heavens, and is fertilizing the land with the waters of truth. In the halls of the National Congress and the State Legislatures, and in Ecclesiastical Assemblies and Conferences, Slavery is a leading topic of discussion. It divides Churches, agitates benevolent associations, controls the issues of politics, and forces itself upon the public attention in books, pamphlets and newspapers. All schemes for stopping the agitation of the subject have only served to cover their authors with ridicule and contempt ; and so, we doubt not, it will be in time to come. A revolution has begun, which can never go backward, but which must, at no distant day, bring freedom to the slave, and deliver the land from its deadliest curse. We know not through what scenes of fiery persecution and civil war we may be called to pass, but the path of duty for us is plain, and ultimate victory certain.

" Long, too long, have we been dreaming
O'er our country's sin and shame;
Let us now, the time redeeming,
Press the helpless captive's claim,
Till, exulting,
He shall cast aside his chain ! "

Signed by direction of the Meeting.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,
RUHANEY WAY,
OLIVER JOHNSON, } Clerks.

III.—WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

It is most difficult to shake off the prejudices of education, especially those grafted on our *religious* natures; and the idea that woman was made for *man*, and not for herself, has been so thoroughly taught in the theology of all times, that we fear that Progressive Friends even are not developed to the point where man beholds in woman an equal, and where woman herself feels the grandeur of her destiny.

There is no cord by which the human soul can be so strongly bound as that which fastens on the religious element in our being, and no chain so firmly riveted as that we believe fixed by the hand of God. We rejoice in the demand woman now makes for her civil and political liberty, but the incubus that rests on her soul and prevents her from asserting her most sacred rights, is found in religious authority. We therefore most earnestly urge women every where to come out from the popular Churches, to repudiate all priestly power, and that whole system of theology which teaches that woman is an inferior creature, the author of evil, and must, by a life of suffering and submission to her royal victim man, atone for the mighty blunder by which she darkened the sunshine and poisoned the joy of Paradise. If *man* begins to rejoice in religious freedom, how sincerely should woman thank the Lord that the day of *her* deliverance is at hand!

Where the Divire principles taught by the Christian system have prevailed, there has been done a great work for woman, but the Christianity of the popular Churches has no especial claims on the female sex. The "Christian religion" has two phases on the Southern plantation—one for the white man and one for the negro;—so has it ever had for man and woman. Man was made a little lower than the angels, he may commune with God face to face; he may be his vicegerent on earth; he may be Pope, Cardinal, Bishop, Priest, a voting member of a country Church. But woman, the mother of Jesus, and his Apostles, and of all the saints that ever trod the earth, where and how is she ever recognized in the popular Churches of our day?

She may bury herself in a nunnery, keep midnight vigils in old cathedral walls, chant the "Te Deum," have holy hands laid on her head, be an angel of mercy to the sick and the dying, in damp prison walls or the abodes of poverty and vice; but no post of ease or honor awaits her. The one aim and centre-point of her religion is submission, in Church and State, and at the fireside.

Her religion is neither elevating nor ennobling. It does not make her free, but more completely the slave of any one who knows just how to manage that element in her nature. The Church every where has ten victims from the female sex to one from the other, notwithstanding the contempt in which it ever has held, and still holds, all womankind. One

would think that a system that teaches woman that she is and must ever be the subordinate of man, in all his grossness of thought, word and action—that she was made for no higher purpose than his pleasure—that she has no rights in and of herself, neither to her own person, nor to the pursuit of her individual happiness, would have been repudiated by the mass of them long ago. And so it would if their reason had not always been held in abeyance to a blind veneration for authority. Every human soul will ever and anon rise in its dignity, though mountains of oppression are heaped upon it. It will think and reason and query with itself, Why these longings, these aspirations for a better destiny? why this earnest wish to act independently, if, from the cradle to the grave, I am for ever to speak and act by the will of another? If *man* has suffered from authority—if his reason has been crippled, his noblest impulses checked, his most sacred affections perverted and withered, his individuality all merged in ecclesiastical institutions, woman has always been dragged down to a still lower depth; she has always gone one step further; for she has not only bowed down to Church, Pope, Cardinal, Bishop and Priest, but to mere *manhood*, in every relation of life. It is difficult to estimate the galling bondage of woman's life, educated in fear and dependence. The best and bravest dare not stand alone. In a careful review of this whole question, we feel convinced that the chief barrier in the way of woman's progress is her own religious belief that she already holds the true position assigned her by God. She really religiously believes that she was made for man, to cook him meat, and bear him children. Is it any wonder then that the few women who do protest against this overwhelming public sentiment seem harsh and impatient? "Oppression makes wise men mad." They would be gods and not *women*, could they, with their enlarged views of woman's true destiny, calmly and meekly bear all the evils of their present condition.

When woman sees fit to take her true position, as the mother of the race, the equal of man, there must, of necessity, be an entire revolution in Church, State, and Family. This reform aims not merely to make a few new laws, to grant a few privileges, or to redress a few grievances, but it is indeed a new creation. Behold! the degraded slave of man, the victim of lust, fear, and priestcraft, stands forth in the full dignity of womanhood, self-reliant, conscious of her own dignity and strength, and rejoicing that in her redemption a nobler race of beings shall bless and beautify the earth.

Signed by direction of the Meeting.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,
RUHANEY WAY,
OLIVER JOHNSON, } Clerks.

IV.—TOBACCO.

We record our earnest testimony against the use of tobacco, on the following grounds, viz:

1st. It is unnatural, unnecessary, and useless. The appetite therefor is wholly artificial.

2d. It is offensive to a refined taste. This is evident from the fact, that men of cultivation instinctively shrink from even the suggestion that their mothers, wives and daughters may become slaves to the use of this noxious plant.

3d. It is expensive—a waste of money. What a shame that men should pay more for this poisonous, filthy weed, than for the support of schools and colleges! Few countries, in proportion to their population, consume so much of it as the United States.

4th. We have the authority of eminent physicians for declaring that it is exceedingly injurious in its effects upon the human system—that it tends to produce various diseases and to shorten life. One physician, Dr. L. B. COLES, late of Boston, who investigated the subject thoroughly in the light of physiology, expressed the opinion, that more lives were destroyed by tobacco than by intoxicating liquors. This may or may not be true; but it is a strong evidence of the pernicious influence of the article, that a responsible individual, who has devoted so much attention to this subject, has arrived at such a conclusion.

5th. Like every other poisonous stimulant, it tends to blunt the intellectual faculties, and the moral feelings. Other things being equal, who would not have more hope of enlisting the influence of an assembly of men in favor of any good cause, if they were in no way addicted to the use of tobacco? What preacher of righteousness would not be encouraged by the knowledge that his audience was too refined, too much under the influence of their higher feelings, to indulge so vulgar a habit?

For these reasons, and for others which we cannot now specify, we earnestly advise all whom our voice may reach to banish the use of tobacco from their families, to discountenance it in the community, and especially to warn the young against acquiring a habit so pernicious, filthy, and degrading. We are the more careful to utter our testimony against this evil, because it exists among ourselves. Not a few of those whom we love, and who are associated with us in the cause of reform, are the slaves of tobacco. They are “bound, lo! these many years,” and have not the strength to break their chains. We sympathize with them most sincerely, while we would rebuke them with Christian fidelity, and in the spirit of love.

Signed by direction of the Meeting.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,
RUHANEY WAY,
OLIVER JOHNSON,
Clerks.
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V.—TE M P E R A N C E.

UNDER a lively sense of the evils resulting from the use of intoxicating drinks, and of the injurious effects of the liquor-traffic, we desire to renew our testimony in favor of Total Abstinence, and to recommend the practice thereof to all with whom our words may have influence. However important it may be to secure the enactment of Prohibitory Laws,—(and we certainly believe that the justice of such laws cannot be consistently denied, except by those who reject the whole scheme of penal legislation,)—our main reliance for the progress of this, as well as every other reform, must ever be upon moral instrumentalities, upon the power of truth over the human intellect and conscience. The injurious effects of intoxicating liquors upon the human system, even when imbibed in the smallest quantities, must be further exposed. The ignorance of multitudes on this subject, notwithstanding the discussions of the last thirty years, is astonishing; and yet, when we make due allowance for the strength of a perverted appetite, and the tenacity with which men cling to social customs of long standing, the wonder is, not that so little, but that so much, has been accomplished. We must “learn to labor and to wait.” Revolutions in the habits of communities and nations are not the work of a day, nor even of one generation. The period, however, cannot be far distant when the traffic in intoxicating liquors, to be used as a beverage, will be ranked as a crime and treated accordingly.

Signed by direction of the Meeting.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,
RUHANEY WAY,
OLIVER JOHNSON, } Clerks.

VI.—TREATMENT OF CRIMINALS.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Pennsylvania:

THE Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, held at Longwood, near Kennett Square, Chester Co., Pa., from the 18th to the 21st of Fifth month, 1856, deeply impressed with the wrongfulness and barbarity of Capital Punishment, sends up to you this earnest memorial, praying for its immediate abolition, and for the substitution therefor of such wholesome restraint and discipline as will have a tendency to reform the criminal, and make him a useful member of society.

We are also constrained to invoke your earnest and conscientious attention to the sanitary and moral condition of penitentiaries and jails. We entreat you, by your regard for humanity and the public welfare, to adopt such measures as will effectually prevent the appointment of unsuitable persons to the oversight of these institutions. Prisoners, we fear, are often treated with a coldness and harshness, which tends to blunt all the finer sensibilities of their nature and prepare them for new crimes. It should be remembered that the criminal, however degraded, is yet a human being, and that the treatment which is adapted to the development of his higher nature and of his capacity for self-restraint, will at the same

time work out the best results for the community. Men who have the care of prisons should be imbued with a Christian and philanthropic spirit, and have such a knowledge of human nature in all its phases, as will qualify them to labor heartily and successfully for the moral improvement and elevation of their inmates. When we remember how much has been done to improve the system of prison discipline by the faithful labors of John Howard, Elizabeth Fry, and Dorothea Dix, we are encouraged to hope that this our humble memorial may exert a favorable influence upon those whom the people have clothed with legislative authority.

Signed on behalf and by direction of the Meeting.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,
RUHANEY WAY,
OLIVER JOHNSON, } Clerks.

VII.—FIRST-DAY MEETINGS.

MANY of us feel concerned to make some observations to those who are interested in the Organization of Progressive Friends, respecting the proper use of time on the first day of the week, which the custom of society has devoted to rest from labor. We desire, in the first place, to separate ourselves from all superstition respecting that day, from all asceticism, from every idea that the day is more holy than any other. All days are holy, and we can say no less than that man is accountable for the proper use of his talents on every day of the week. But while our minds are impressed with these truths, we also believe that specific duties may properly be assigned to particular periods of time. Only a limited portion of the community ever attend the popular worshipping assemblies. We should be surprised if it were otherwise, seeing that the beautiful simplicity of truth is so often obscured by dogmas, traditions, and superstitions. There are multitudes of intelligent men and women in our country, capable of imparting valuable religious, moral, and scientific instruction. We submit, therefore, for your consideration, that you should assemble together in your respective neighborhoods, in your dwellings, and other suitable places, for the purpose of edifying and instructing one another. The lack of public speaking should not operate as a discouragement, for there is sometimes a power and sympathy in silence that words are altogether inadequate to convey. If but two or three should assemble, remember that strength does not always depend upon numbers.

The laws of matter, no less than those of mind, are the laws of God, and are, therefore, proper subjects of investigation in such meetings as we now recommend. In proportion as we comprehend these laws, we shall be convinced of the beautiful harmony of the Divine economy, and every where be able to trace the hand of the Divine Architect.

Signed by direction of the Meeting.

JOSEPH A. DUGDALE,
RUHANEY WAY,
OLIVER JOHNSON, } Clerks.
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A Sermon.

FALSE IDEAS OF GOD AND HIS GOVERNMENT.

Delivered at the Opening Session of the Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, held at Longwood, Chester County, Pa., on First-day morning, 18th of Fifth month, 1856.

BY SAMUEL J. MAY,

MINISTER OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH, SYRACUSE, N. Y.

COLOSSIANS, II: 8. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," who said, (Luke 12: 57,) "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

THERE is scarcely any thing which logical argument may not seem to prove; scarcely any absurdity which logicians have not attempted to maintain. But let a man reason ever so ingeniously to establish that which is false; though he may so devise his premises that they shall appear to lead inevitably to his conclusion; yet, if that conclusion be really untrue, it will not stay proved by all his logic. Doubt, unbelief, will again spring up in the minds of those who thought they were fully persuaded; yes, spring up perhaps in the mind of him who was confident he had established the proposition by irrefragable argument. Nothing but truth can stand; and truth stands not on any basis of proof, which human ingenuity has laid for it, but in virtue of its own strength, its own indestructible nature. Truth is seen not in a factitious glare, which some reasoner may have thrown around it; but in a clear light which emanates from itself. Truth is in its very nature luminous. It is radiated from God himself, the fountain of light. It is the light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world, to the extent that he is able and disposed to receive the light. The highest evidence is self-evidence. This is allied to consciousness, if it be not the same thing. And until what any man declares to be true, is seen and felt to be true, it will not really be believed, however logically he may have proved it.

It is by self-evidence, of the highest sort, that we know that we ourselves exist; that we have bodies and minds; that we see, feel, think, enjoy, suffer, hope, fear, love, hate, do right, or do wrong. It is the self-evidence of consciousness, by which we know all these things. By self-

evidence scarcely less distinct, we know that we are in the midst of a universe of matter, that we are surrounded by innumerable objects and existences, seen and unseen, which make themselves manifest to us through our several senses.

And it is by self-evidence, only a little removed in clearness from the foregoing, that we know there is a God; that we know we are dependent upon him and accountable to him. No species of human beings, scarcely a sane individual, was ever found wholly destitute of the ideas of a Supreme Being, of dependence and moral responsibility.

Very different indeed have been the statements, theories, creeds of men respecting Deity; but they all rested upon the truth of his existence. Some have deduced from appearances the doctrine of a plurality of Gods; and Gods of diverse characters, from the highest benevolence to the lowest malignity. On these diverse ideas of the character of the Deity have been framed the various mythologies and superstitions of the heathen world, and the various theological systems of the Christian world. But mankind have not remained satisfied with wrong notions of the Deity. Their dissatisfaction has worked continually to the development of better ideas; and will ever work, until men shall be brought to true conceptions of the Heavenly Father; of his unerring wisdom, perfect holiness, and impartial, parental love, for all the children of men.

No theory or creed can be established as the truth, which has not in its behalf the self-evidence of truth. On self-evidence, not on authority, not on logical argument, rests man's belief in God, and in the benignity of his providence, and in the excellence of his government. The Bible does not prove the existence of God. It assumes the fact that he has existed from all eternity; and thence goes on, through successive stages of progress, for more than fifteen hundred years, to record the better and better ideas of his nature and character, that were revealed to the thoughtful and devout, until, as I believe, the truth on this highest of all subjects culminated in Jesus Christ, to whom it was self-evident, and through whom it has become self-evident to as many as have received him, that there is only one God, and that He is the loving parent of all men—more wise than any earthly father, more tender than any earthly mother.

Jesus Christ, however, did not merely declare, dictate to men what is right. Many of his most momentous lessons were given in parables, which were, in their very nature, implied appeals to his hearers' own perceptions of the true and the good. On some occasions, he directly summoned the multitude to decide the most important moral questions, saying to them, "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

God has never left men without evidence of his being and character, and of their own nature and destiny. They who have not received his law, as it was revealed by Moses and the Prophets, and afterwards by Christ, are and ever have been a law unto themselves, having the law of God written in their hearts, their consciences also approving their obe-

dience or disapproving their disobedience to what they have perceived to be right.

And yet, on all the great subjects to which I have alluded, the schoolmen, the theologians, the men of logic, have attempted to fasten upon the human mind the wildest absurdities; have attempted to make men believe propositions that set at naught all their innate perceptions of truth, and outrage their deepest intuitions of the right.

One philosopher—a very learned, ingenious, and withal a very amiable, excellent man—I mean Bishop Berkley, of whom Pope said, that he “possessed every virtue under heaven”—Bishop Berkley maintained that belief in the existence of the exterior world is false and inconsistent with itself—that those things which are called sensible, material objects, are not external, but exist in the mind—are merely impressions made on our minds by the immediate act of God. He insisted that our own existence is an idea, not a reality; aye, and he proved this strange proposition, so far as logic alone ever proved any thing.

Not less absurd have been the theories which some men have attempted to establish respecting the nature and character of the Deity; and not any more sensible have been the arguments upon which they have relied. I will not now enter the region of heathen mythology, or turn your attention to the superstitions that still prevail in the pagan world. Sufficient will it be for my present purpose, to remind you of the strange opinions which have been broached, and some of which have extensively prevailed in Christendom.

A large proportion of the Christian Churches, since the fourth century, have professed to believe that God exists in three distinct, coequal, coeternal persons, and yet that these three are only one. Of course the human mind could not remain satisfied with this self-contradictory hypothesis, however logically and Scripturally it may have been proved. The professed believers in it, therefore, have been for ever struggling against the absurdity of their creed—striving to get some statement of the doctrine more accordant with Scripture and common sense. Consequently, we have, from high ecclesiastical authorities, a dozen different statements of the doctrine of the Trinity, which are as dissimilar to each other as they are to the simple Unity of God.

On the other hand, some men, a few in England, many in Germany, and more in France, generally men of science, a few of them very learned men, disgusted with the irrational, absurd doctrine of God, which the Church would enforce upon their reception, madly rushed to the opposite extreme, and denied the existence of any Deity. The doctrine of the atheist was logically proved, at least so many insisted. The savans of France, nay, “the people of France,” by their representatives in General Assembly, voted that there was no God. But the intuitions of human nature, the deep wants of the soul, contradicted the denial; and lo! that whole nation (notwithstanding the logical argumentations and scientific

proofs of the atheists) have gone, with a rush, back into the bosom of the Church, from which they had been driven out into a world without a God. Prove to a man, never so logically, that there is no God. He may assent to your conclusion; but he can no more live and act consistently with such unbelief, than with the unbelief of his own corporeal existence. Some coward fear, some outcry of despair, will show he yet believes, and trembles as the devils do, because he does not love.

Again, as to the character of God and of his moral government; some, theological system-makers and leaders of sects, have taught, and the largest part of the Churches of Christendom still profess to believe, that God is the most jealous, vindictive, capricious, implacable, partial of beings—supremely selfish—or what amounts to all this. It has been declared, and still is, by those who assume to be the most sound in faith and evangelical, as it is set forth in the creed of the great Presbyterian Church, that “By the decree of God, *for the manifestation of his glory*, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others ordained to everlasting death. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot either be increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace. The rest of mankind,” that creed goes on to declare, “the rest of mankind God was pleased (according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, *for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures*) to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sins, *to the praise of his glorious justice.*” And this last class of beings, which is supposed to be very much the larger portion, are to be, that creed declares, “cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”

In support of this strange, this horrid system, than which there is nothing more shocking in any of the heathen mythologies, its believers adduce a very formidable array of texts from the Bible, and strengthen these Scriptural authorities by a well-wrought chain of iron logic. But has the mind of man rested satisfied with the system of doctrines of which this is an essential feature? Far otherwise. The system is outgrown. Many of this day, who have given their assent to it, do not believe it. Their ministers keep the most offensive parts of this creed as much out of sight as possible, or conceal their hideousness by a veil of modern explanation. Nothing, I believe, would sooner empty the churches which

claim to be orthodox, than for the ministers to read the Presbyterian Confession of Faith intelligently to the people, and require each one of them to believe it all, as the condition of continued membership. And yet the truth of it, as thousands suppose, has been established both by Scripture and argument.

One extreme drives men to the opposite. Consequently other religionists have contended, and have persuaded themselves and their disciples to believe, that as no men are to be saved because of their faith or good works, so no men ought to be lost for want of faith and good works; that, as those who are to receive the gift of salvation will receive it in consideration of the satisfaction made to Divine justice by the sacrifice of Christ,—then all men ought to receive the same salvation, if God be impartial; because the sacrifice of Christ (*i. e.*, God incarnate) was an infinite sacrifice, sufficient for all. The benefit of it cannot be withheld from all, if it be given to any, without the most glaring caprice and favoritism, which it would be impious to ascribe to the Heavenly Father. Therefore these theorists contended and persuaded many, that all mankind were bought with a price, would be saved at death, would know no misery, suffer no punishment beyond the grave, but enter at once into a state of everlasting happiness.

This theory has been stated and maintained with a good deal of power and ingenuity—by arguments drawn from the Bible in great abundance, and directed with no small degree of logical skill. It has been urged with great reason that, to say the least of it, this system was more honorable to God, and more encouraging to men, than the dark system which it rose up to oppose. But has the mind of man rested satisfied in the belief, that there will be no suffering for sin in the life beyond the grave? Surely not. The analogy of this life, in which each successive stage of our career is seen and felt to be retributive to that which preceded it, conspires with that “fearful looking for of judgment to come,” which rises instinctively in the guilty breast, to assure us of the truth of the doctrine of a future righteous retribution. There are now, I suppose, very few, who really believe that the evil consequences of sin end with the present state of our being, and that all, because of the infinite sacrifice of Christ, or of the indiscriminate love of God, enter at once through the grace, into all the joy of Heaven. Very few now believe this doctrine of ultra-Universalism;—although much Scripture has been alleged in its behalf, and it may be very logically deduced from the premises laid down in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and in the Creeds of our Presbyterian and other Orthodox Churches.

I have dwelt longer upon this part of my subject than I intended. My wish is, that we all should bear in mind that many things have, in times past, been clearly proved, and most strenuously insisted upon by ministers and Churches as essential truths, that are now utterly rejected by their lineal orthodox descendants, or are suffered to lie dormant in their creeds.

Never was there a man mightier in the Scriptures than Dr. Edwards, and he is renowned the world over for his logical acumen and hardihood. He proved (so far as an array of texts, and an unflinching application of logical argument could prove) his dark, horrid system of Redemption. Few of his own day could stand before him. Not many in this day can maintain their ground as his opponents; and yet, common sense and the intuitions of humanity reject his dreadful conclusions. In the most Calvinistic Churches of these times, few, I trust, can be found who do not reject some of the essential parts of Edwards' system. This great fact confirms what I said in the beginning of my discourse. "Let a man reason ever so ingeniously to establish that which is false, though he may so devise his premises that they shall lead inevitably to his conclusion, yet if that conclusion be untrue, it will not stay proved by all his logic." There is that in the intuitions of the human mind and heart which, sooner or later, will reject what is false. Falsehood, error, wrong, evil of every sort, is a disturbing force every where, both in the bosom of the individual and the bosom of society. It sooner or later causes unrest, disturbance, commotion; and will cause them until itself is eliminated.

The intuitions of humanity have already come to be recognized, even by orthodox writers and preachers, as being, at least, assistant judges of what is true and right. This is an acknowledgment that God has not left men, and will not leave us, to believe a lie. A precious acknowledgment! A most auspicious recognition of that great spiritual fact, that "there is a light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world, to the extent that he is willing and able to receive the light." Yes, there are, given us by God, tests of truth. When we come to the knowledge of it, it becomes to us *self-evident*. Thus there are some things established in the moral world, and against them the powers of Hell cannot prevail. One of these established truths is, that *there is a God*, an almighty, all-wise, impartial, merciful Being, and not erring, passionate, capricious and cruel. He has vindicated his character against the heaviest accusations that were ever impliedly brought against it by sectarians and fanatics; and he will vindicate it yet further, until all men shall know that he is Love—a benevolent Parent, not an inexorable tyrant. God cannot have created the human race to curse, but to bless them. "He hath not appointed us to wrath," says the Apostle Paul, "but to obtain salvation." "This corruptible must put on incorruption." "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;" and "as we have borne the image of the earthly, so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly." The common sense and good feelings of men will struggle until they have thrown wholly off that *dark pall*, which the theologies, the false religious philosophies of men have drawn over the moral universe; and the light of God's countenance is seen shining benignantly on all; kindly even upon the evil and unthankful, evidently desiring not the punishment, the suffering of the most wicked, but rather that all should repent, turn to him, and live rejoicing.

in his love. O! the time will come, when, contrary to the creeds of the Churches, men shall know that God is not the most selfish of Beings, "doing all things for his own glory," but the greatest of all because the best of all Beings—yes, the greatest of all (I say it reverently) because the servant of all. "My Father," said Jesus, "worketh hitherto;" and we all should gratefully own that he still works—works continually in the great laboratory of nature for the support and happiness of all sentient beings—works unceasingly in, and with his moral offspring, that they may be brought "to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Another great truth has become self-evident, and is, therefore, established beyond the reach of controversy. It is that "all men have an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Not kings, princes, and other magnates—the elect of earth—not these alone have this inalienable right, but all men—children of the humblest no less than of the most exalted—the offspring of the negro as much as of the Anglo-Saxon. This great truth has made its way, and will make its way throughout the world, notwithstanding the opposing powers of State and Church. It is the truth which, under various names, first defied the Papal Hierarchy, led the van of the Protestant Reformation; and now claims for every one spiritual as well as personal independency of all his fellows. It is this truth which has already limited some of the monarchies of Europe, and has done much to sap the foundations of every throne. This truth reared the civil and religious institutions of our country; and this same truth is now shaking this Republic from centre to circumference, and all the ecclesiastical and political organizations; and will shake them to pieces, unless it can shake out of them the tremendous falsehood, which has gained such a hold upon us, through the eloquence and logic, the personal and official influence of such men as Calhoun, and Clay, and Webster in the State, and Drs. Lord, and Fuller, and Adams in the Church—the tremendous falsehood that one class of the people of the land have a right to hold another class as their property, and dispose of them as domesticated brutes. The high authority, the overshadowing influence of even such men, or of men mightier than they, cannot make the self-evident truth of the American Declaration to be treated as a "mere rhetorical flourish," though some of them had the impious effrontery so to pronounce it.

O, no! It is an established, an eternal truth. It will live, and be believed, and understood, more and more; and will go on modifying, and mollifying, and reconstructing human governments, until they shall be framed in accordance with it. Then, if not before, will be corrected many errors, into which theologians have fallen, by founding their theories of the Divine Government upon analogies drawn from the hitherto very imperfect governments of earth. The orthodox system of faith and scheme of salvation was devised, you know, by men living under kingly, despotic rule; used to seeing human beings cruelly treated, yes, set utterly

at naught by their tyrannical masters, as if the rights and feelings of humanity were of no account. Such a theological system as that propounded in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, the Thirty-nine Articles of the Episcopal Church, or the Westminster Catechism, could never have been thought of by men who had always lived under a free, humane republican government. The central idea of orthodoxy was derived from royalty, despotism ; and, as they pass away, Calvinism, and its kindred, will go with them.

Once more, it is self-evident that our Heavenly Father will himself always show respect to the inalienable rights of man ; rights which he conferred upon them, yes, guaranteed to them in the very constitution of their being. He hath enjoined it upon all men to respect those rights, and he surely will not violate them himself.

One of the rights of men is, to have their sufferings commiserated and their misery relieved. He who can look upon the anguish of a being so susceptible to pain of body and of mind as man is; he who can look upon his anguish expressed in the contortions of his frame, can hear his shrieks of physical or mental agony ; or behold the more terrible emotions of despair that may glare from his silent countenance ; he, I say, who can be the witness of such suffering, and feel no pity, no desire to give relief, is a moral monster, let him make what professions he may of humanity or divinity. The sufferer has a right to commiseration, to sympathy, to relief. It matters not, though he brought his misery upon himself by his folly or vices ; still, in his wretchedness, he has an inalienable right to compassion—a right to such efforts of his fellow-beings as may tend to reclaim him ; and to such contributions of time, influence and money as may mitigate, as much as may be, his misery. Since John Howard, and M. Pinel, and Elizabeth Fry, and Miss Dix, and Charles Spear, and L. M. Pease, and C. L. Brace, and others, have shown what can be done for the relief of the wretched, who feels that it ought not to have been done ? who hesitates to say that more yet should be attempted ? that the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak—that the rich ought to contribute to the relief of the poor—that the wise are under obligation to instruct the ignorant—the virtuous to reform the vicious ? Who hesitates to say as much as this ? Who denies that the unfortunate, the miserable, the sinful, have a right to all that can be done to improve their condition, without perpetuating the wrongs that underlie their sufferings ? What is there upon the pages of history, that has thrilled with horror so many hearts as the accounts given of the tortures inflicted in the dungeons of the Inquisition upon the victims of the Roman Catholic hierarchy ? As we have seen them (in description) stretched upon the rack—every limb drawn to its utmost tension—agony thrilling through every fibre ; and have observed the inexorable sternness of the reverend tormentors, that would relax only that the wretches might live to suffer more, have we not exclaimed, in our abhorrence, “Let the crime of the offender have been what it may, the godly

fathers,' who could inflict such suffering, and be unmoved by the sight of it, must have been more devilish than he!" Let the crimes of men be the greatest that can be imagined, there is a limit to the punishment which justice should decree, or mercy would allow. If the punishment have no intention or tendency to the benefit of the prisoner, then is it cruel; and those who inflict it themselves become criminals, tormentors, murderers.

And yet, what were the tortures of the Inquisition, compared with those which orthodox theologians and preachers tell us God will inflict upon sinners in the future state? As much less awful as the power of God is greater than that of man; and as eternity is longer than time.

Not long ago I had the unhappiness to hear a very distinguished orthodox minister, a notorious revivalist, and now President of a Theological Seminary, attempt to prove that "the justice of God will require the everlasting punishment of the wicked." His course of argument I need not detail to you. His conclusion was too shocking to be established by any proof.

"The wages of sin," said he, "is death, eternal death, not annihilation, not an extinction of consciousness, for that would be a release from punishment. It must then be an eternal dying." He then went on to describe, in the most graphic style, a scene of mortal agony such as some of you may have witnessed, so distressing to beholders, as well as the dying one, that even the most loving relatives were relieved when it was passed, and the last gasp told that the dreadful agony was over. "Hold that picture," said he, "before your imaginations. Then know that the sinner will be stretched upon such a bed, forever dying but never dead. When ages of anguish, which no tongue can describe, no mind can adequately conceive, shall have rolled away, the sufferer will lift up his supplicating cry, 'O Lord, how long, how long must I endure this torment?' Then shall there come from the Infinite One, a voice saying, '*Forever!*' Myriads of years, cycles of centuries will revolve, when the lost one shall again shriek out, 'O Lord, how long! how long! must I endure all this!' and there will come from the Infinite above the same answer as before, '*Forever!!* Eternity, whose seconds are millions of centuries—eternity will roll on, until angels, archangels, and all but the Uncreated One have grown gray with age; and the same suppliant cry shall ascend from that bed of eternal dying, 'O Lord! O Lord! how long, how long must I suffer here?' And again the voice of Him who changeth not will answer as before, '*Forever!!!*'"

Horrible! how could a thought so horrible, so impious, enter a human mind? Whence did it come, if not from the father of lies? Think of a mortal man attributing such inexorable cruelty to the Heavenly Parent! It sounded in my ears like demoniac blasphemy. Rather than conceive such an idea of my God, and have it dwell in my bosom, I should much prefer to be deprived of the power of thought for ever. If I had risen in

that pulpit and proposed to prove, that the God and Father of us all is the most cruel, vindictive, inexorable of tyrants, the audience would have fled in disgust at the announcement of the outrageous proposition ; and yet there we sat, a thousand of us, and listened, without any outcry of shame, to that man's vivid description of his incomparable malignity, of which my account is but a faint resemblance. Blessed Father of our spirits, we know that the picture our deluded brother gave of Thee was utterly false ! Our hearts and souls reject it ! The gushing compassion which thou sendest through our bosoms, at the sight or the cry of misery, assure us that thou art Love. The intuitions of our own nature, and the blessed words of prophets and holy men of all ages tell us, that such relentless wrath will never be found in Thee !

The hearing of that discourse was an era in my religious life. It aroused me to look with closer scrutiny than I had ever done, into the theology of our orthodox Churches ; and to see, more clearly than before, how utterly derogatory to God and man it is.

The arguments adduced by that preacher were, as most of the arguments of those who would uphold the orthodox doctrine of "Divine sovereignty" are, based upon supposed analogies in human governments, which, it may be seen at a glance, are very different from the Divine government, both in the purpose for which they are maintained, and the skill and power with which they are administered. Indeed, that preacher distinctly urged, that such an exhibition as he had given of the torments of the damned, was as necessary in order to deter men from setting at naught the government of God, as the gallows was necessary to deter men from committing such crimes as are accounted capital offences against human governments. His illustration was a particularly unfortunate one in this age of the world, when almost everywhere in Christendom there is a growing distrust of capital punishment—a very prevalent persuasion, at least, that the exhibition of it does harm rather than good, having been found to increase offences by awakening a sympathy with the sufferer more than with the outraged law ; arousing a detestation of the government that inflicts cruel punishments, more than of the crimes which incur them ; so that almost everywhere *public executions* are discontinued ; in many parts of our country and of Europe capital punishment is abolished ; and one of the prominent reforms of the day is the amelioration of the whole criminal code. If, therefore, there be any force in the analogy of the gallows, it would go to show, that, even if the justice of God does require the everlasting punishment of the non-elect or unregenerate, it were better not to give any descriptions of that dreadful infliction, nay, not let the terrible fact be known, lest men be driven to abhor rather than revere the government of God, and be made more obdurate in their sins.

As in the case of Berkley, Edwards, and Calvin, if you grant to such a skilful logician as the preacher to whose shocking discourse I have par-

ticularly alluded, the premises he laid down, you may find it difficult to escape the conclusion to which he came. But, my hearers, if beforehand you discover no unsoundness in a preacher's or writer's premises, when you find the conclusion to which he would bring you to be so awful as this of which I have been speaking, you are justified in asserting that the premises must have been false, because the conclusion is an outrage upon the highest of all truths, namely, *the parental goodness of Almighty God.** No array of passages from the Bible, no course of argument, however skilful and cogent, can prove and hold men to the belief that God is an inexorable, wanton tyrant.

For my part, I know not how a man's mind and heart are constituted, who can coolly set about to prove that there is such malignity in the bosom of the Being who created us, who has ordered all events, and on whom we are wholly dependent for the powers we possess, and our opportunities for their development. What doctrine would lead men, so surely as this, to hate God, and curse him for the gift of life? Why, if I could believe the representation given us of God's utter implacability towards the non-elect and unregenerate, to be true; if I could believe that any of the frail children of mortality are indeed exposed to an eternity of such excruciating torment, my heart would break or else become harder than the nether millstone. And would not yours, my hearers? I have laid in the grave familiar friends, near and dear relations, (have not you?) who were not perfect; who may not have been of "the elect;" who had not met with such a miraculous regeneration as the orthodox theory declares to be the only sign and condition of escape from everlasting Hell. Now if I could believe that they are stretched upon that bed of eternal dying, and through the endless ages of eternity are to cry for mercy, and yet receive no mitigation of their sufferings, my reason would forsake its throne, or my heart would melt in the fervent heat of its anguish, unless indeed I should become so hardened in my selfishness, as to rejoice in my own escape from Hell, although all the rest of men were damned. But I am so constituted, that it seems to me, I should prefer to be damned with them, than to become so indifferent to their fate. Nay, I contend, that if indeed the reprobate are to suffer everlasting and profitless, unmitigated punishment, then the regenerate will go through all eternity bewailing their horrid fate, or else will show themselves to be more devilish than the damned.

O! this doctrine of everlasting, unmitigated, profitless punishment is too horrible to be believed. If the Bible teaches it, then is the Bible no longer worthy of our confidence. If Logic be the art by which it may be proved, then is Logic a lying trick. Better were it to give up our Sacred Scriptures, and renounce the dialectics of the schoolmen, than to renounce our common sense, and give up our confidence in the wisdom and goodness of our God.

* Let me refer my readers to the admirable letter upon this subject by the celebrated John Foster of England.

"Beware, brethren, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," who said, "Why even *of yourselves* judge ye not what is right?"

One of the very bad effects of the tremendous errors which are upheld by our orthodox Churches, especially set forth in the creed of the Presbyterian denomination, is that they lead men to regard their conduct, and the characters they form in this present life, as of little consequence; certainly of far less consequence than a certain something, which may or may not be done for them by the sovereign power of God, without any respect to their faith or good works. The worst of men are quite as likely, some say more likely than the most moral, to be made the subjects of Divine grace and regeneration. Indeed the doctrine of everlasting punishment is so horrible, that few, if any, of the most unscrupulous advocates of the doctrine, have cruel hardihood enough to apply it to the case of an individual on his death-bed, however wicked his life may have been; few can declare to surviving friends and relatives, that the departed one has gone to suffer eternal torments, which will never be abated in their intensity, and will produce no beneficial effects upon him. However calmly they may tell us of "the millions of the damned, who will make Hell resound forever with their undying groans," they cannot so easily give over to hopeless perdition a single individual whom they have ever known. On the dying bed, any sign of contrition is eagerly caught at, as an evidence of regeneration. Hands folded, eyes raised in prayer, a tear, a sigh even has been enough to warrant the hope, that the prodigal son has made his peace with God; and has passed from the left to the right hand of the inexorable Judge. So a man's *conduct in life*, his habitual conversation, his character, is to go for nothing at the last judgment.

See the effect of this system of error, which the Church has substituted for Christianity, since the first century. The primitive Christians, those instructed by Christ and his Apostles, were, for the most part, a holy people; remarkable for their unselfishness, their love of one another; even throwing their properties into a common stock, and living together as members of one family. They were a morally courageous people, daring to hold and to avow sentiments different from those tolerated by the Church and State; and to endure any losses and persecutions, rather than deny or compromise what they believed to be true and right. Moreover, they were peacemakers, and men of peace, not seeking to avenge themselves, but giving place unto wrath, and seeking to overcome the evil-minded by love.

But since the days of Augustine, his horrid theology has been in the ascendant in the Church; and what has been, what is now, the character of those who are called Christians? In what respect are they worthily distinguished from "the children of this world?" Are they not notoriously (with a few excellent exceptions in every community) as greedy

after riches as other men; as ambitious for place and power; as much given to the vanities of the world, ay, to self-indulgence and sensuality? And as to the pacific spirit of Jesus, how little is it encouraged by those who profess to be his followers! The most sanguinary wars that have ever desolated any portions of the earth in any age, have been waged by Christian nations against Christian nations. The men who have distinguished themselves in the slaughter of fellow beings are the most honored throughout Christendom; while, in private life, the man who manifests that spirit which "suffereth injury long, and still is kind," is too generally regarded and despised as a coward.

Acceptance with God, and everlasting salvation being dependent, according to the creeds of the Churches, not upon the characters and conduct of men, not upon their faith and good works, but upon the unconditional grace of God, the highest inducement to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts is taken away. And, although those who "judge of themselves what is right" know better; and, if they study the Bible for themselves, find that it enjoins holiness of heart and life as indispensable to the favor of God; and although more worthy ideas of the Heavenly Father, and of the nature and destiny of his earthly children are getting disseminated; are raising up new sects in Christendom, who have more faith in the doctrines and precepts of Christ than of Augustine or Calvin; and although individuals may be found in every ecclesiastical enclosure who are truly pious and benevolent, yet is it only too obvious that the Church has very often hindered the progress of true religion; has not favored the highest sanctification of the individual; nor helped much to redeem the world from ignorance, sin, and misery. The maintenance of its own authority and prerogatives has always been paramount in its regard to the glory of God, and the good of mankind. Dissent from its creed, and neglect of its ritual, have always been accounted by it graver offences than any disobedience to the commandments of God, however flagrant. The highest faith, the warmest love, the purest devotion to righteousness and truth, have usually been found *outside the pale of the Church*.

No one here will deny, that the Papal hierarchy, wherever it has maintained its ascendancy, has sat like an incubus upon society; depressing every where the aspiration after a more expanded intellectual or moral life than itself has attained. "The Church of England" has upheld the government of Great Britain in almost all its atrocities—the Bench of Bishops often having been found the most unscrupulous portion of the House of Lords. And in our country, the Orthodox Church—the great Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, and Baptist organizations,—have been shown to be the *bulwarks of American slavery*—that system of iniquity, that "sum of all villanies," involving the violation of every commandment of God.

I have thus warned you, my hearers, to beware of the philosophy, the traditions, the theology of the Church, because the connection is so obvious

and natural between the false views they give of God and of the nature and destiny of man, and the prolonged degradation and cruel oppression of some classes of our fellow-beings, for whose relief and elevation, as friends of progress, we are bound to labor.

If God, the highest, holiest One, be indeed so supremely selfish as the Creed declares He is—"doing all things for His own glory," and that glory consistent with the unspeakable misery of a large portion of those beings to whom He has given a moral nature, and all the circumstances and events of whose lives He hath ordered; if such be indeed the character of our Creator, the giver of all our faculties, and the fountain of all the wisdom and strength we have to use those faculties, then how can it be reasonably expected that the worshippers of such a God should be otherwise than selfish; seeking first of all things their own aggrandisement and gratification; doing this at any expense of loss and suffering to other beings, whose good may not be consistent with "their glory."

If it be true that God has predestinated some to honor and others to dishonor; some to everlasting life and salvation, and others to everlasting death and damnation; will it not be very easy to assume, and can we much blame the "favored few" for assuming, that the same arbitrary distinctions are made among men in this world also?—that some were sent here on purpose to be miserable, and others to be happy; some to be ignorant and others to be wise; some to serve and others to rule; some to be slaves and others to be masters? How are we to repel the inference, that in perpetuating these cruel distinctions the tyrants of earth are only following the Divine plan? Once more, if it be true that God is so wantonly cruel as to consign the larger part of the family of man to interminable and indescribable misery, for no fault of their own, but only because of their descent from Adam; can we wonder much that slaveholders think themselves justified in reducing the posterity of Ham to the abject condition of domesticated brutes? Surely the worshippers may not be expected to be more wise, more just, more merciful than their God.

O then, how fervently may we rejoice to know, and how diligently should we spread abroad the truth throughout the land, that God, the Heavenly Father, is not such a partial, capricious, cruel tyrant, as the theology of the Orthodox Churches represents him to be. Indeed this is the first thing that the friends of progress must needs do. Nothing has hindered, nothing does now hinder, nothing will ever hinder, the improvement of men so much as false notions of the character of the Deity. If their ideal of perfection be low, sensual, devilish, their aspirations cannot be high and purifying.

Let us then, Progressive Friends, and Friends of Progress, send forth to all who will hear us, the declaration of these glorious, revealed and self-evident truths; that the God of the whole earth is the impartial parent of all mankind, more wise than any human father, more tender than any human mother. He is no respecter of persons, doth not regard the rich

more than the poor ; the proud more than the lowly ; the learned more than the unlettered. All, from the prince to the peasant, from the tyrant to the slave, are amenable to his holy laws, so far as they know them. All men are bound to love God with all their hearts, and their neighbors as themselves. All are required to do unto others as they would that others should do unto them. The Most High will hold all moral beings accountable for their conduct. The principle of retributive justice is the foundation of his government. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. By this shall be measured the awards of his future judgment. It is a most salutary, most merciful law ; from the application of it to himself no wise person would wish to be excused. By the operation of the principle of just retribution, men have been led to discover all that they know of right and wrong, good and evil. By the operations of this principle have been effected all the improvements that have been made in the character and condition of our race. It will continue to operate in this world, and in the world to come, until all rational and moral beings shall be brought, willingly or through much suffering, to obey God in all things ; until all anger, and malice, and selfishness are subdued, and love reigns triumphant in every bosom. Good will triumph over evil, truth over error, love over hate. "This corruptible must put on incorruption." "As in Adam *all* die, so in Christ shall *all* be made alive." "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Man was made for improvement, and the creeds of the Churches and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Everlasting progress, everlasting approximation to the perfect, this is the high duty, this the glorious destiny of man. The prayer of Jesus will be answered ; the foreseeing wish of his soul will be gratified ; the great purpose of his life and death will be accomplished. *Man will be reconciled to God* ; and all will be one with Him, even as Christ is one. If the discipline of this life doth not accomplish this Divine purpose, then will the sufferings of the life to come do it ; for, as the Apostle Paul declared, "God hath not created us for wrath, but to obtain salvation."

Correspondence.*

FROM THE OHIO YEARLY MEETING.

THE Ohio Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends held its last annual gathering in September, 1855, in Salem, Ohio. A goodly number of earnest spirits met together on that occasion, to counsel and strengthen each other in their efforts for man's elevation.

Viewing from different stand-points the various opinions and institutions of society, it was not to be expected that all those who were desirous for the acquisition of that truth by which alone man can be freed, should intuitively recognize it in its various manifestations, and instinctively desire the adoption of the same means for the accomplishment of a common end. Hence the introduction of the various subjects, which were discussed during its sitting, elicited no inconsiderable debate, which was conducted in the main in a kind and courteous spirit and manner. To those who have been long fettered by the rules of contracted organizations, who have been taught to speak and think only as their leaders bid, the extent of the recognition of the right of free speech at such meetings is at once novel and startling. And if at times it approaches very near the line which divides liberty from license, or even passes beyond it, yet there is no cause for alarm, for if any evil should result, it will speedily correct itself, and is far more durable than fettered intellects and padlocked lips.

It has been said of some western paper towns and cities, that they were extensively laid out, but sparsely settled. This comparison may have suggested itself to some who attended the sessions of this Meeting; for although its members proposed to consider the then present aspects of the anti-slavery question, the gross inconsistency of the opponents of the life-taking principle sustaining a government based upon it, the necessity of better understanding their political and religious relations, the abolition of capital punishment, the overthrow of intemperance, the acknowledgment of the equality of the sexes, modern spiritualism, writing and spelling reform, the use of tobacco, and land monopoly, yet they found three days all too short for the examination of so many topics; and it is to be feared that their partial investigation of so many wrongs or evils proved less effective than would have been their fuller discussion of a more limited number. All of the subjects mentioned were discussed—a few of them at considerable length. Much sympathy was expressed for your fellow-citizen, Passmore Williamson, and a letter on behalf of the Meeting was addressed and forwarded to his oppressor—Judge Kane—in condemnation of the atrocious conduct of that official.

Letters were received from various sources—among which was one from your Meeting—all of which were greatly acceptable, and listened to with attention.

* Want of space compels us, much to our regret, to abridge some of the communications addressed to the Meeting.

Among the strangers in attendance, and who greatly contributed to the interest of the meeting, were Ernestine L. Rose of New York City, W. H. Hoisington of central New York, S. S. Foster of Mass., and S. N. Wood of Kansas.

A proposition was made to change the name of the association from "Progressive Friends," to "Friends of Human Progress." The former, it was urged, had a sectarian sound, and instances were cited in which the name had kept away earnest inquirers after truth, they knowing nothing of its comprehensive platform and catholic spirit, judging it from its name to be simply a Quaker organization in advance of those of the old school. After considerable discussion it was concluded to adopt the name of "Friends of Human Progress," as being more indicative of the character of its members and the scope of its organization, which gladly welcomes to its counsels all who have at heart the progress of man, and would labor for the elevation of the human race. As "Friends of Human Progress," they will as heretofore unite with you in urging upon society the duty of a thorough investigation of all pertaining to man's happiness, cherishing an earnest desire for the speedy arrival of that day when it will not only be seen, but freely acknowledged, that neither the hoariness of antiquity, the sanction of honored names, nor the customs of the world, can ever justify that which is wrong, or debase that which is right.

On behalf of the Corresponding Committee of the Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends of Human Progress.

JAMES BARNABY,
BENJ. S. JONES.

FROM THE WATERLOO YEARLY MEETING.

DEAR FRIENDS:—* * * We believe that individual sovereignty and true manhood are the only sure basis of organization, and that, to have a living Association of Christian men and women, the individuals composing it must feel a deep sense of personal responsibility. While we thus believe, we nevertheless appreciate the manifest advantages arising from associated effort and from the expression of kindred sympathies and desires. We were therefore gratified by your words of good cheer. They gave us renewed faith in the ultimate triumph of truth, and in the realization of our high hopes of the "good time coming," when the religion of manhood and the promptings of truth and righteousness shall regulate the actions of men in their intercourse with each other.

We can hardly allow the opportunity to pass, without reiterating our deep and abiding interest in the progressive developments of our age, the mighty and radical reforms to which we look for the elevation of our race. We have learned to believe that religion is not a mere abstract creed—a routine of forms and rites—nor yet a mystery which we may vainly strive to grasp, and the results of which are only discoverable in the excitement of the feelings and passions; but that, in its truest and best sense, it is a comprehensive system of good, embracing in itself every thing that is true and pure and ennobling. It is not a mere speculation, to be demonstrated by the abstruse reasonings of profound metaphysicians;—it is a living reality, to be exemplified in a life consecrated to goodness, purity, and truth.

Words of exhortation are good in their place, but the highest exhortation is found in a noble action. It is well to SPEAK truly—it is better to LIVE truly. Jesus measured men by the standard of their actions, not their creeds. He exhorted them to do unto others what they would that others should do unto them. He inculcated the beautiful lessons of love,

forbearance and sympathy. But nowhere did he exhort to the adoption of any creed or any prescribed system of worship. He taught that all are brethren, and that we should all love one another. He judged men by their fruits, not by their professions. He looked at the motives of the heart, not at the words of the mouth. And thus, if we would appear before the world as the representatives of a new and higher idea of religion, we must demonstrate it in our lives.

In this view of the high obligations of religion, we see the duty which rests on us of identifying ourselves with the reforms of our age, and of uttering our protest against the wrong and outrage, and violence with which barbarous ignorance, blighting superstition, and priestly dictation, have cursed the earth. We would enter our solemn protest against all that degrades humanity, and would vitalize that protest by making our action consistent therewith.

In looking upon the many wrongs which afflict the world, we are led to believe that one prominent cause, which has operated in preventing the more rapid progress and development of the race, is found in the fact that men and women have not been taught the great lesson of individual sovereignty and responsibility. Empty forms and dogmas have been substituted by ecclesiastical authority for the vital piety which shows itself in deeds of love and mercy. Men have been taught that they must prostitute their reason and yield implicit obedience to the IRSE DIXIT of men whose only evidence of Divine authority is the impious effrontery with which they claim it. We would unite with you and all others, in untiring efforts to teach man the high destiny which awaits him, and the imperative obligation that rests upon him to think and act independently.

Our Meeting has been attended by a large number of persons, from different parts of the country, and we feel encouraged in the good work before us. We have faith that the race is progressing, and that the truth will triumph. The elements of mind are too much tossed to be quieted without radical changes. We believe that the great upheaving will result in the increase of human happiness, domestic, civil, everlasting.

Signed by direction of the Annual Meeting of Friends of Human Progress, held at Waterloo, N. Y., Sixth month, 1855.

THOMAS M'CLINTOCK, } Clerks.
RHODA DE GARMO, }

FROM THE FRIENDS OF PROGRESS IN NORTH COLLINS, N. Y.

The undersigned, being a Committee appointed by the Friends of Human Progress in this place, to communicate with you, are happy to inform you, that your example, together with that of the Friends at Waterloo, has been fruitful in awakening the friends of truth and liberty in this quarter, to issue a call for a similar meeting, which was held in North Collins, Erie Co., N. Y., on the 26th, 27th, and 28th days of August last.

The call was responded to by numbers greater than was anticipated, and the interest through the entire meeting exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine. Surely the world is at length rousing from the slumber of ages, and thousands, feeling their noblest emotions, warmest affections, and highest intuitions stifled by the crushing influence of popular traditional theology, readily respond to any call which seems to proffer anything better. Truly the fields are already white for the harvest, but the laborers are few. The number of truth-loving and liberty-loving men and women in this region is somewhat numerous, though as yet little or

nothing has been done towards organizing their efforts. But the necessity of some kind of combination for the purpose of mutual aid, as well as for extending their labors and influence, is beginning to be felt and talked of.

Blocks, as we are, from the various crumbling social edifices around us, we need more or less hewing and dressing before we are readily fitted into a new harmonious structure. Many of us have been rendered so sensitive by the galling party fetters and sectarian trammels, from which we have escaped, that we can scarcely endure to hear so much as organization named. We shrink back with horror from the mere shadow of our former bondage. But extremes are ever productive of opposite extremes. If man's nature demands association, as we think it does, in order to promote its highest welfare, it seems to us that some kind of combination might be entered into which would at once concentrate our energies while it rendered us more individually free, and more efficient to aid each other and the world. But nature cannot be hurried. That which will endure must have time to grow.

We were not a little cheered by your representation, together with that of Waterloo, through those esteemed friends, Thomas M'Clintock, Reuben Webb, and William Barnard. Subjects touching the various leading reforms of the day were as amply discussed as our limited time would permit.

The severity of the winter, and the unparalleled obstructions of the roads prevented our meeting regularly the past winter, but since the opening of spring, interest seems to promise regularity and general attendance.

Hoping that we may be favored with a full representation from you at our next Annual Meeting, we subscribe ourselves, your friends and fellow-helpers in the cause of truth, liberty, and humanity.

L. H. PITCHER, NANCY PITCHER, GEORGE W. TAYLOR, W. M. H. HOISINGTON, RACHEL HOISINGTON,	}	Committee.
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COLLINS, May 5, 1856.

FROM L. MARIA CHILD.

WAYLAND, Mass., April 14, 1856.

I THANK you for the cheering words contained in your kind letter ; also for the Report of the Meeting of Progressive Friends which accompanied it. I bless God for every honest and kindly effort to melt or undermine the walls of sectarianism. If nature had bestowed upon me an organization like a battering-ram, I should even be thankful to have them *battered* down with sledge-hammer-force. But, in the first place, the battering-ram and the sledge-hammer do not predominate in my temperament ; and, in the second place, the world has obviously enough been trying *such* forces, for ages, with no good result.

That sectarianism is the very worst enemy of human progress, I think no serious and reflecting mind can be disposed to deny. What division of interests, what wrangling about school-books and church funds, it introduces into towns ! How much money is expended to support it, which might be profitably employed in enlarging the minds of the inhabitants, by teaching them improved modes of agriculture, useful sciences, and a broad, comprehensive system of universal morality, based on reverence for God and love for man ! How this theological fiend separates neighbors and relatives, chills friendships, interrupts love, and disturbs married life !

I actually knew two women living near each other, in a lonely country town, who would n't speak to each other for months because one maintained that the body of Jesus was incorruptible, and the other declared she did n't believe it. Supposing Jesus himself had preached to fishermen and farmers, on the hill-side in their neighborhood, as he was wont to preach in Galilee, two thousand years ago, how much importance would *he* have attached to such controversies about dry bones? Would he employ himself with *doctrinal* points? Or would he say to them, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye *love one another*"?

In another town, I was acquainted with two worthy women, who interchanged many kind offices in times of sickness, or affliction. Both were sincerely devout, but one had been educated a Catholic, and the other a Calvinist; therefore, each believed that the other *must* be damned. This conviction troubled them, however, because their own hearts were more compassionate than the Deity in whom they had been taught to believe. Each spoke to me of the other in words to this effect: "She is such a kind, good woman! What a pity it is that she cannot be saved! I pray often and earnestly that she may be converted from the error of her ways, and thus be prepared to enter the kingdom." I merely replied: "Your fervent *wishes* for each other's salvation is doubtless an offering more acceptable to God than faith in any doctrinal points." But, in my own mind, I imagined them both entering the spiritual world together, each pleading for the other with the angels. The Calvinist saying, "She was kind and good while she was on the earth. She helped the poor, comforted the sick, soothed the afflicted, and prayed often. She was educated among Catholics, who taught her to pray to the Virgin Mary, which was a great sin. But she worshipped as well as she knew how, and it grieves my heart that she should be punished for it through all eternity." The Catholic, in her turn, pleading: "This woman worshipped God devoutly, but she had the misfortune to be brought up among heretics. She never prayed to the blessed Virgin, and she ate meat on Friday. These were *grievous* sins; but she was always good to the poor and the suffering. Would that my prayers could avail to redeem her from purgatory!" I seemed to see the angels turn aside to conceal a smile; and to hear them answer, with gentle seriousness: "Be not troubled, sisters; the prayers of *both* were heard in heaven; because they were upborne on the wings of sincerity and mutual love. All *such* prayers are availing. God does not judge according to the ideas of men."

The older I grow the more do I incline to believe in the wisdom of Eclecticism. If ever the science of medicine rests on a permanent basis, I think it will be brought about by accepting and combining contributions from allopathy, homœopathy, and hydropathy. A Universal Church, which prescribes no creed whatsoever, and reverently accepts what is good and true from *all* religions, appears to me to be extremely desirable. Such a light, I think, begins to be visible above the horizon. The Arabian Emir, Abd-El-Kader, now in Paris, has written a book to prove that the Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan religions are built on the same foundation, and are separated merely by points of detail. He complains that European scholars do not habitually manifest so much reverence towards the Author of all things as they ought; and says: "If Mussulmans and Christians would believe me, they might agree together, and treat each other as brethren." It certainly is a step in the world's progress to have a Mohammedan missionary exhorting Christians to greater reverence toward God, and charity toward their fellow-men. It is pleasant to observe, in various parts of Christendom, at the present time, similar indications of liberality toward Mohammedans.

The innumerable sects born of the Protestant Reformation, all assuming the Bible as a basis, and all so very sure that their own interpretation of its pages is the true one, have been working for a wider result than they were aware of. Their narrowness and bigotry have forced many to inquire whether abstruse doctrines can really be of much consequence in the formation of human character, since about the same proportion of good men and bad men may be found among those who believe them, and those who reject them. They have been driven still further. They have said, If doctrines are essential to salvation, by what process shall we arrive at *certainity* concerning them? since the answers which Written Revelation gives to inquiring souls are so various, and often so contradictory. Is the Catholic Church right in asserting that "there can be no infallible book without an infallible *interpreter*"? In this dilemma some fly off into ultra scepticism, while others fall back passively into the arms of the Catholic Church; but between these two extremes are a multitude whose souls are casting off theological trammels, without ceasing to be religious. The progress of human freedom has compelled bigotry to be more civilized than it was in the days of racks and thumb-screws; but its charity is very supercilious, betraying a proud consciousness of superiority by its air of *condescension*. It took centuries of struggle and bloodshed to establish among Christians the idea of mutual toleration; but the phrase which represents that hard-fought idea has now become offensive to free souls. The first expressed dislike to the word *toleration* I found in Dymond's Essays; a book which is in truth a diamond, reflecting purest light. He asks indignantly what right a man has to *tolerate* his faith any more than he has to *tolerate* the color of his eyes or his hair.

The process of freeing the world from theological thralldom may, I think, be expressed in one very brief and simple maxim: Let every individual fearlessly *express* his *own* convictions, while he *respects* the convictions of *every other* man. People in general fail in one or the other of these duties. If they are in a *minority*, they are afraid to give frank *utterance* to their *own* doubts or conclusions. If they are in a *majority*, they *despise* the convictions of *others*, or assume it as a great merit that they *descend* to *tolerate* them.

I have read your EXPOSITION OF SENTIMENTS with heartfelt pleasure. I have seldom, if ever, seen a document that breathed throughout such a spirit of rational freedom and Christian love. Its tone excites hope that the Progressive Friends will be bold in the exercise of individual freedom, while they treat with tenderness and respect the sincere faith, or the honest scepticism of others. I trust their platform will not be limited to the accommodation of Christian sects merely, but that it will be broad enough to admit Brahmins, Buddhists, Jews, and Mohammedans, as brethren—as scattered members of the same great family; children of the All-Father, who, under various climes and circumstances, has caused light from the Spiritual Sun to shine upon their souls, and refreshed their thirsty hearts with dews of Divine Love.

May the blessing of God rest upon your efforts to produce this sublime result! It *will* rest upon them; for it is one of His immutable laws that no word of truth, spoken in love, is ever *lost*. Above all the clamor of bigotry, and the monotonous drawling of routine, it goes sounding on forever.

Yours for Truth and Freedom, wheresoever they may lead!

FROM CHARLES K. WHIPPLE.

BOSTON, May 9th, 1856.

I THANK you for the invitations I have received on this, as on former years, to attend your Annual Meeting. Want of time and means is the sole cause which now, as heretofore, prevents my joining your assembly. You may judge that it is not want of interest, when I tell you that I recognize in you what I have never before known to exist, and what I have for many years past longed to see, a body of men and women united in the promotion of practical Christianity, fulfilling the true functions of a Christian Church, yet free from the limitations and vices of a sect; founded on the truth which Jesus uttered, "The kingdom of God is *within* you"—and illustrating that other truth, and that only sound rule of judging which he pointed out to us—"A good tree bringeth forth good fruit: ye shall know them by their fruits."

I especially rejoice in two distinctive features of your enterprise, and deem myself authorized confidently to expect success to your efforts, at home and abroad, far beyond that attained by any *sect*, if you permanently retain these.

The first is, your idea, purpose, and expectation of Progress. Most of the sectarian associations which have falsely called themselves Churches of Christ, have fettered their own hands and feet by the assumption that they could mark out and define, without defect or error, in a creed of speculative doctrines, all the truths important to man's spiritual welfare through this stage of existence. And even though one of the leaders in whom they boast, a prophet of their own, the good John Robinson, told them not obscurely the truth which they needed, earnestly charging his congregation—

"If God reveal anything to you by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am verily persuaded the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word"—they failed, as perhaps he also did, to see the larger truth contained in these words, and limited his meaning to the letter of a volume in which are bound together the dead with the living, the Jewish with the Christian Scriptures; assuming not only that a book *could* be a permanent master of living men, but that these two, diverse even to contrariety, were their one unitary and homogeneous rule of faith and practice. And even the one *sect*, which began by an earnest protest against this error, and a seeming appreciation of the need of freedom for spiritual growth,* we now see looking back longingly to the house of bondage, whence they came out, remembering the fish which they did eat in Egypt, and ready to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, and put their necks again under the yoke of a creed, if so they may escape from the reproaches cast upon one strong and brave man, who actually *uses* this freedom, his and their birthright, but which they only boast of, without daring to use. You recognize the truth which Jesus taught, that those who practise that part of God's will which they already understand, shall have yet more revealed to them, and as other of his prophets have said—"Matter is God's Old, and Spirit his New Testament," always open to our inspection, and always yielding a harvest to the diligent laborer therein, who may find

"Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

* You no doubt remember the attempt of the Unitarian clergy, in 1853, to cause a creed to be adopted by their denomination, and the letter thereupon written to them by Theodore Parker, a life-member of the Association.

You recognize the fact that in this primary school of existence we have not attained to the possession of all truth, that our business is to keep our eyes, minds, hearts, and souls reverently open, and eager for the acquisition of more, as fast as we are fitted to recognize, appropriate, and use it; and that in the diligent, practical use of such truth as we already possess, lies our best means of attaining higher and yet unperceived branches of it.

The second source of the confidence I feel that your enterprise will be permanently (however slowly) useful in the diffusion of truth lies in the fact that you provide for the action and usefulness of a *Christian ministry* without the deteriorating influence of an *order of clergy*.

Paul disclaimed for himself and his brethren the assumption that they held, or sought to hold "dominion over the faith" of the first Christians, and took rather the appropriate designation of their "helper." Those who claim to be his successors fail to imitate this modesty. They seek to be lords over God's heritage, and use the authority which men foolishly concede to them to check, instead of stimulating inquiry, and to retard, instead of advancing reform. The spectacle of a Bench of Bishops going unitedly against improvement in hierarchical England, and of the clergy of all the great independent sects of this country giving their influence to the support of popular vices, and in opposition to unpopular reforms, ought to have shown to all reflective people the dangers inherent in such an institution. If the liberty of the children of God is invaded by a prohibition to seek or to use any truth in His wide universe conflicting with the dogmas included in the narrow pen known as "orthodoxy," much more is it invaded by the impudent assumption that to teach even this small amount a *license* from the clergy is indispensable. It was said, plausibly enough, that guards were necessary to secure an uncorrupted transmission of the truths of Christianity from one generation to another; but by and by it was found that the guards themselves were the most dangerous corrupters; and we now see the amazing spectacle of clergymen censuring the opponents of slavery, war, &c. as interlopers in the domain of the Church, undertaking reform by irregular and unauthorized methods, while they and their brethren, instead of leading the Church by better methods to the same end, are supporters, some directly and some indirectly, of the enormities assailed; and the Churches, trusting, without examination, in the wisdom and goodness of their leaders, are content to have it so; and even the few clergymen who have been awakened by recent events to a sense of the vicious character of slavery, dare not strike at its very existence, as they do at that of *foreign heathenism*, but oppose merely its extension, and even then stultify themselves by conceding the amplest Christian fellowship to its practisers and supporters.

Should not these things teach us that to search, examine and decide in view of the evidence manifested to our individual minds, and to act upon the conscientious decision thus formed, are indispensable parts of "the glorious liberty of the children of God?" I rejoice, and present to you my hearty congratulations that you have not only claimed, but begun to exercise these rights; and I welcome in your association a Christian ministry, clearly distinct from a priesthood and from a clergy.

CHARLES K. WHIPPLE.

FROM WM. LLOYD GARRISON.

BOSTON, May 15, 1856.

YOURS is a convocation of "Progressive Friends"—that is, as I understand the term, the FRIENDS OF PROGRESS. Your claim is a high one—admitting of no limitation, tolerating no fetter, recognizing no finality in matters pertaining to spiritual development. You are not anchored to the past; you are not satisfied with the present; your steps are onward and upward. While accepting, at its true value, whatever of truth and right has come down to us from other ages, you believe in "forgetting the things that are behind," and pressing forward to the high mark of human perfectibility, rather than in idolizing a time-worn parchment, or in burning incense to dead saints and heroes.

Fidelity to your principles and professions, in this corrupt age and blood-stained country, will leave you little time for repose, and assuredly subject you to public reproach and social excommunication. For all this, "rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you." Your work, comprehensively speaking, is twofold:—to unmask a spurious religion, every where assuming to be the religion of Christ—and to denounce a profligate government, claiming to be based upon liberty and equality. In performing this work, you will be denounced for your "infidelity," on the one hand, and for your "disloyalty" on the other. These opprobrious epithets will stimulate you to still greater effort, as furnishing the most satisfactory evidences that you are on the right side, engaged in the right work, and bearing the right testimony.

The cause of imbruted millions in our land, whose groans are borne to us by every Southern breeze, and the clanking of whose chains is heard continually, will receive your warmest sympathy, and elicit your strongest approval.

You are not only for equal liberty, but also for universal peace—peace, not nine times out of ten, and the tenth time for war (which in morals is an absurdity), but peace always, and war never. The weapons which "border ruffians" know how to use, whether bowie knives or Sharp's rifles, you believe those who are "called of God" should not know how to use for the advancement of any cause, however righteous. On this point, especially in view of the present inflammatory state of the public mind, I doubt not your testimony will be very explicit, as it cannot fail to be serviceable.

The rights of woman, in every land and by every government trampled under foot, will be asserted by you, in all their bearings. Those rights must be recognized, restored, and enjoyed, before the world can be elevated, or tyranny will cease to curse our race.

You are all teetotallers, and, therefore, the beneficent cause of temperance will not be forgotten by you.

Your defence of religious liberty will be without "compromise," and your practice of it "without concealment." It was never more needed than now.

But I need not go into these specifications; your hearts are full, your spirits expansive, your purposes sublime, and you need no prompting.

Believe me, in the bonds of spiritual fellowship, and in every good cause,

Your friend and co-worker,

W.M. LLOYD GARRISON.

FROM JAMES RICHARDSON, JR.,
Minister of the Unitarian Church, in Brooklyn (N. Y.)

BROOKLYN, E. D., May 18.

I HAVE been very much in hopes that I might attend the Meeting of Progressive Friends at Longwood next week, but I fear I shall not be able to do so. There is certainly no class of minds, with whose views and sentiments and aspirations in regard to man, I more profoundly and earnestly sympathize. But, as I may not be able to come myself, and give the testimony of my presence and spoken word, I take the liberty of sending a little Rhyme, recently written, setting forth, in its length and breadth, the argument of the various tyrants against whom we stand opposed, and to whom the thinking and working of the Progressive Friends of Truth, Justice and Humanity is bringing swift destruction.

JAMES RICHARDSON, JR.

THE TYRANT'S ANCIENT ARGUMENT: OR, THE DANGERS
 OF THOUGHT.

CEASE your thinking, O ye people! shouts the Tyrant, fierce and loud,
 As, with scornful eye, he glances o'er the slowly moving crowd;
 Ye were made for toil and labor—mark your hard and brawny hand!
 We are God's appointed Rulers, to obey is his command!

Cease your thinking, lest ye fancy ye can rule *yourselves* by thought,
 And the world's fair peace and order be to swift destruction brought;
 Lest, seduced by idle dreams, ye may fondly think there be
 Minds and souls in those rough bodies, and ye're men as well as we.

At the outset, God appointed one to rule, and one to serve;—
 Each their separate sphere and duties, from which 'tis a crime to swerve;
 Meted out to every station is its comfort and its care,
 All complaining is rebellion; things are best just as they are.

Higher place has higher duties, greater power brings greater care;
 Lesser burdens, lesser dangers, wait upon your humble fare;
 This fair world is rightly ordered—all men cannot have the throne;
 Be at peace then, rest contented, and let well enough alone.

Cease your thinking, ye fanatics! speaks the gray Conservative,
 All that's new is vain and foolish, and but for a time shall live;
 What is old is good and glorious, what is old alone is sure;
 We must trust in that which has been, for that shall alone endure.

Talk not, then, of old corruptions, errors, wrongs and slavery;
 These are ancient institutions, God himself ordained to be:
 Will ye dare oppose his order, think to improve the Almighty's plan,
 Which he formed to curb and punish vain, rebellious, sinful man?

Cease your thinking, chimes the Rich man, else you'll soon *uneasy grow*,
 Feeling you must have whatever we your lords and betters do;
 I am rich and sleek and happy, my condition's well enough;
 Every change *my peace* endangers, and your grievance is but stuff:

For it makes you fierce and restless, fills your lives with discontent,
 Loses present joys in grasping what for you was never meant;
 Like the dog in ancient fable, losing a substantial fare
 In the treacherous stream, by snapping at its shadow gleaming there:

Claiming that mankind are equal, that the bondman should be free,
 That the vile, degraded masses all should educated be;
 Claiming that the humble labor of the low, degraded thrall
 Is too worthy, is too noble, to depend on capital.

Cease your thinking; shrieks the Bigot, there's your Bible, and the creed
 To interpret what it tells you, so that all may be agreed;
 So that no one thro' this thinking, daring to dissent from these,
 Might blasphemously endanger his salvation and his peace.

Carnal Reason's use is sinful ; 'tis a blind deceitful guide ;
 I have wondered why 'twas given us ;—Satan's lure is Reason's pride !
 God ordained you Priests and Elders, who should safely think for you ;
 Tell you what you must believe in, what you may and 'may not do.

Thought has led vain men to question what the Creeds set forth as true ;
 Thought has made them doubt sound doctrine, and reject the good old view ;
 Thought upon the *Ancient Bible* even dares to lay his hand,
 Doubts its perfect inspiration, doubts Jehovah's stern command ;
 Doubts that God himself directed Jews their fellow-men to slay ;
 Doubts they were his chosen people, whom all others must obey ;
 Questions all their marvellous stories ; faults their patriarchal sires,
 And calls pious David wicked, adding to his wives Uriah's ;
 Says that God is near his children now, as in the days gone by,
 That his living inspiration breathes through all, both low and high.
 With the Bigot chimes the Tyrant, and the gray Conservative :
 Stop this thinking, crush these thinkers, or we can no longer live.

FROM NATHANIEL H. WHITING.

MARSHFIELD, Mass., May 11th, 1856.

YOURS is to be a meeting of "Progressive Friends." I like the *adjectives* when used in connection with the purposes avowed in your circular. It declares that you believe in *Progress*—that a man's eyes were placed in his *forehead* to enable him to go forwards, not backwards,—that you dare affirm the vitality of the present, and the still greater possibility of the future.

If you are true to this declaration, you will maintain the integrity of the individual soul, and the absolute right of every man to judge unqualifiedly all that has been, or is now, and to receive or reject it according as it may aid or retard his own growth and improvement.

The Past is valuable to us, just as the earth with its composition of vegetable and mineral elements, and which, with its atmosphere and sunlight, forms the circumstances of material existence, is essential to the tree which even now begins to throb with the awakening life of returning summer. Into this it plants its roots, and from thence by its vital fluid gathers the fibres which are wrought into its wonderful organism. But it is the tree which is alive, and which has the capacity for growth and progress, not the inorganic elements that compose its framework.

So these deposits of mind—opinions, creeds, arts, sciences, actions, making up the sum of human history, by which we are surrounded, in which we are imbedded—constitute or are composed of elements which the living soul of to-day may work into its organization, and thus be stimulated in its onward and upward course. But let us remember that we are alive ; these are dead. They are not to rule us ; we are to judge and use them, just as they may be needed for the wants and aspirations of the present hour.

Progress, then, is written on all things. To-day is better than yesterday, as it has, in addition to its own inherent vitality, all that the experience of yesterday, in its multiform labors, has left behind it.

Certainly, then, we are not to be held in bondage to old forms and creeds, but are to utter our own opinions and organize our own creeds and institutions, so that we may say at last, when our work here is completed, we have faithfully performed the mission given us ; and thus, while contributing to the strength, vigor, and elevation of our own souls,

shed a clearer light along the pathway of present life, which shall also prove a dawn of hope and promise across the horizon of the future.

You believe the power and will of the Great Spirit to make fresh revelations, in fulfilment of the wants of the advancing man, is not yet exhausted. You will doubtless testify as much. I trust your meeting will be eminently successful. In order that it may be so, your "Testimony" should be bold and faithful, such as will leave its mark upon the age in which you live, while "Wrongs, and Frauds and Falsehoods shiver" under all the masks which respectable Conservatism, hollow Cant, and formal Piety have thrown over them.

N. H. WHITING.

FROM SAMUEL LONGFELLOW,
Minister of the Second Unitarian Church, Brooklyn, N. Y.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., May, 185

I FIND that I shall not be able to attend your Yearly Meeting; but sympathize so fully and so heartily with the principles and aims of your Society, that I am desirous of saying so to you and your friends.

I cannot but look upon your movement as one of the most encouraging signs of our time—a time so pregnant with life and hope. I see the truest religious minds looking for a broader platform of unity and action than any of our religious denominations offers, and I am rejoiced at every movement which, like yours, expresses and begins to embody this desire and this faith.

As in our State, all questions of party politics are losing their interest and merging themselves in the one great question of the supremacy of freedom or slavery, so in our Church all differences of belief are becoming unimportant before the one great point of individual liberty or external authority. Can we hesitate on which side to range ourselves? For one, I wish to identify myself unreservedly with all who are on the side of freedom. I have entire faith in the safety and in the duty of unrestricted free thinking and free speaking. I have no fear of the consequences. I believe that man's nature is such that, if left unimpeded, it does inevitably gravitate towards the truth; and, even if through trial of all possible errors, will reach the truth at last. I believe that God has seen this freedom to be best for man, and that he will not desert or leave "unassisted" any mind, still less condemn any, that is honestly seeking. I believe that in man's spiritual nature, in the perceptions and affirmations of his reason and conscience, he is to find God's immediate and perpetual revelation—to the individual always authoritative, above Church or Bible or Legislature. This is "the spiritual man" that "judgeth all things," and if in its imperfect development, for the present, its judgments be diverse and fallible, yet in its progress it tends always to unity and infallibility.

With such faith in freedom and in the inner light, your Society have consecrated themselves to work for the coming of God's kingdom on earth, the rule of justice and love in all the affairs of men, the righting of every wrong, the establishment of peace and brotherhood, and righteousness and joy. May God be with you, friends: He is, and will be to the end, as you are faithful; for through all willing souls he is working still, through human agencies slowly but surely regenerating and reforming all men and all institutions, carrying on to its perfectness that creation which began from his word. Peace be with you, and love with faith!

SAM'L LONGFELLOW.



FROM MONCURE D. CONWAY,
Minister of the Unitarian Church in Washington, D. C.

WASHINGTON, May 5.

CIRCUMSTANCES may possibly prevent my personal presence at your Meeting, but cannot my spiritual presence. I do *love* Quakerism, or what I conceive to be the beautiful principle of it: love is the only word for my feeling toward it. For some months of my life I was much exercised as to whether I should not take up with a little Hicksite Society of Maryland, broadbrim, drab and all, and there await the inevitable cycle which should cause the earth to flower into a large Quaker meeting. Well, I did join a Quaker meeting at last, but it was *minus* broadbrim or drab, outside at least, and, shall I confess? there was but one member in the Society after I joined it.

I look upon the failure of old Quakerism to be the result of a simple law, now finding its level in all Societies. It is, that any thing inherited really is not possessed by the heir. We see in our Society a number of men, chiefly about Boston, who, never having known the thorns above which Unitarianism grew, would leave the thorns fossilized in the hearts of Freeman and Priestly, and pluck the flower alone. They wonder a plucked flower should wither! Do they wonder that a young heir of a million he never earned should be a spendthrift? The money is condensed brain, heart's blood, nerve, sinew—these coined: what knows he of money?

We need union, it is true, but no union save of individuals. Christ prayed, I find, that they might not simply be *one*, but "perfect in one." That is not Christian unity which is not also the perfection of each and all.

M. D. CONWAY.

FROM SARAH B. DUGDALE.

SPRING RUN, Louisa Co., Iowa, Fifth mo., 1856.

ALTHOUGH far separated from you in body, my spirit wends its way to salute you in the love of the everlasting Gospel, desiring that justice, mercy and truth may more and more abound. As my thoughts were turned impressively towards you this morning, before I raised my head from my pillow, I remembered the sentiments of a worthy Friend, who said, "There is wisdom in government that hath respect to its own preservation by adhering to what is profitable to it, and suppressing what may be a detriment; and this is the *image* of the true wisdom; but the *substance* is the birth, which is heavenly, which reigns in the Father's kingdom until all is subdued, and then resigns it up to him, whose right it is. There is a power on earth, which is of God, by which princes declare justice; this is the *image*: and there is a power which is heavenly, in which the Prince of Peace, the Lord of Hosts, doth reign in an everlasting kingdom, and this is the *substance*. By this power is the spiritual wickedness in high places brought down, and those who are *true* delegates in this power can do great things for *God's glory*." My feeble petitions have been put up for you, beloved friends, that you may *dwell deep* in your minds, and hearken to the voice of truth in the soul, and thus the Lord will furnish you with wisdom, courage, and sound judgment.

I have, from my earliest recollection, been instructed in the principles and usages of the Society of Friends. I was admitted when very young into the select councils; have held sweet communion with many of the nobles of our ancient Israel, whose memory I love almost to veneration.

I have attended upwards of thirty Yearly Meetings, in all of which I have been more or less instructed; but I can truly say, I have never found more noble, devoted, or self-sacrificing philanthropy than among some of the dear proscribed Friends of Chester County; and it would be my wish (if consistent with best wisdom) to spend the remnant of my days among you; not that I think I could be of any service to you, but I feel that I need your sympathy and fostering care now in the sunset of life. Oh! beloved friends, I beseech you not to falter. Lift up your voice like a trumpet and show the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob her sins; continue to open your mouths for the dumb and plead for those who are not permitted to plead for themselves; listen attentively to the voice and word of truth in the soul, for it is unto this that the righteous in all ages of the world have fled and found safety. It remains to be a "shelter from the wind, a covert from the storm," where the poor, weary, way-worn traveller may retire and find safety, and hold sweet communion with the *Infinite Father*, who is graciously waiting to teach his people himself, and turn them to a pure language. He will send none empty away who seek Him aright. In the bonds of Gospel fellowship, I bid you *farewell*, desiring an interest in your prayers for my preservation from all that is evil.

Your aged friend,

SARAH B. DUGDALE.

FROM JOHN G. FEE,
Anti-Slavery Preacher in Kentucky.

BEREA, Madison Co., Ky., May 3, 1856.

THROUGH your kindness, I have received the Call of the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends, inviting me to attend their Yearly Meeting. To do so would have been most congenial to my feelings, and had not other and paramount duties prevented, I most certainly would have complied with the request.

You say you would welcome me without caring to scrutinize the points of our creed. I reply: Independent in our Church polity, we know no master but Christ; anti-sectarian in our faith, we know no creed but the Bible; and supreme love to God, and equal love to man, we receive as its foundation principle. This principle really embraced, at once secures the highest orthodoxy towards God, the purest morals among men, and the greatest liberty in society. In heart, God asks no more—man ought not; for "love is the fulfilling of the law."

Just as fast as the professedly Christian world shall really embrace this principle, we may expect, among others, two most glorious results. One will be the downfall of all forms of oppression—the other, the breaking up of that sectarianism which now hinders reform, cripples the efficiency of the Church, and vitiates the true religion of God.

Of the former, this age witnesses no form so revolting to the feelings, so subversive of justice, and so ruinous in its consequences, as American slavery.

In this land, I feel the oppression and contempt heaped upon the poor slave. I have lain down with him, and expect to rise only as he rises.

I, therefore, rejoice for myself, for the poor slave, and, most of all, for the honor of Christ, that in various parts of our land the people of God are assembling, and devising means for the redemption of his poor.

From the earliest history of our Confederacy, the testimony of Friends has been potent, because it has been constant, faithful and consistent.

In the Convention that framed our national Constitution, Mr. Randolph urged as an objection to the importation clause, "that it would revolt the Quakers, the Methodists, and others in the States having no slaves." Had the other denominations been faithful to their early belief and testimony, and had they confirmed their faith by a consistent non-fellowship of slavery in the Church, slavery would have died long since.

Barnes truly said, "Slavery could not live a single hour out of the Church, were it not for the fact that it lives in the Church." No association of persons can maintain an effective testimony against any sin, and at the same time hug it to their bosoms. It is this act of the Church that gives character to the iniquity. On the contrary, had all the denominations treated slavery as a crime, an outrage upon justice, virtue and humanity, the moral would have been ashamed of it, and the profligate and abandoned could not have sustained it.

May you persevere in the work of love and faithful rebuke of wrong, until oppression, and sin in all its forms, shall flee before the face of an awakened and righteous community, like darkness before the morning sun. Then shall we witness, indeed, the evangel of "Peace on earth, and good will to men."

JOHN G. FEE.

FROM OCTAVIUS B. FROTHINGHAM,
Minister of the Unitarian Church in Jersey City, N. J.

JERSEY CITY, April 20, 1856.

I RECEIVED from you, some while since, a circular, accompanied by an invitation to attend the Fourth Annual Convocation of Progressive Friends, to be held in Chester County, Pa., on the 18th of next May. I thank you cordially for the invitation, and wish, with all my heart, I could be there; but fear I shall not be able. I read the account of your proceedings last year with great interest, and felt then that such a movement must be productive of good. I also asked my friend Theo. Parker about you and your purposes, and from him received an account which increased my interest. Movements in behalf of pure religion, simple piety, and living charity, are always timely, but they were never more so than now, when superstition has leagued itself with inhumanity, a corrupt Church striking a bargain with a corrupt State; when sectarianism has become not the imperfect organ, but the deadly enemy of piety and goodness; when men band together, and use the holiest words to describe their union, having nothing in view but the strengthening of despotism of all kinds.

It is encouraging, too, I think, that such a movement proceeds from the Society of Friends—a Society which started with such glorious promise, and has still such noble traditions—whose platform was so broad, whose faith was so spiritual, whose intentions were so radical and earnest. It is good to behold this Society laying aside what some of us have regarded as its own sectarianism, consenting to employ such other ministrations as might prove themselves good, and publishing such a manifesto in favor of truth, purity and progress as this before me. The heart of every man who prays that he may be a Christian, will respond to this call; and if you can get a general response of hearts, that will indicate the extent of your brotherhood more fairly than a large convocation could. That you may have, however, a large congregation, that friends may be present in the body as well as in the spirit; that the meetings may be encouraging to us all, and that your words may go abroad extensively, is the sincere wish of

Yours, very truly,

O. B. FROTHINGHAM.

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FROM WILLIAM H. FISH.

HOPEDALE, Mass., May 8, 1856.

So far as I know your movement—its principles, objects, and methods—I feel that I am very much at one with it, and can most heartily bid it a God-speed. You call yourselves “*FRIENDS*”—a most noble appellation. Friends of God and of Universal Humanity you are—at least this is your profession. No more Christian designation than this was ever chosen to represent any class of men. I almost wish, however, it were a *new* name—it would be so significant to the world, and especially to all genuine lovers of their fellow-beings. But our popular sectarianisms have spoiled almost every thing they have touched—even the holiest words, not excepting those of Christ and God—and Quaker sectarianism has spoiled even this dear name of Friends—at best greatly damaged it. It only means now, to the popular ear, about what Presbyterians and Methodists, Baptists, Universalists, Unitarians, and so on, mean—a *denominational* character—generally those who worship God in the *forgetfulness of Humanity*. But can you, “Friends,” *redeem* the word, and make it stand again in the world for good will, *practical* good will, to all men? I hope it is in you to do it, and that God will aid and bless you in all your efforts to do so—in all your efforts to grow up to the reality of which the word is the symbol or sign.

But you are “PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS.” You do not believe that your fathers, or even any prophet of Old Dispensation or New, gifted and good men as they were, spoke the last word that God had to say or that man is ever to hear. The mass of the Sectarians are partially *atheistic*, shutting up God almost exclusively in the Bible! but you believe in a *living* and *present* God—in a God who inspires men now, as in earlier ages, though still more abundantly, as they are better prepared for his precious gift. You are looking for new light to break in upon your minds from the “Father of Lights,” as he reveals himself through the various Media of his Providence and Grace. You do not believe that the Canon of God’s Sacred Scriptures will *ever* be closed, or his inspiration exhausted. Nor are you, if I understand you aright, theologically progressive alone—if, indeed, you can be said to have a theology—but you are also *practically* progressive—progressive in every moral, humanitarian, spiritual and social direction.

You are also distinctively a *RELIGIOUS* body, and I trust you will always remain so. You cannot, I think, be really progressive to any great extent, except on this ground. There has been much spurious religion in the world—much that has been worse than none—and there is now; but there is a genuine type of it as well as a spurious type; and of this there is a deep and ineradicable want in the human soul and in society. *Mere* Humanitarianism, without faith in God and in an Immortal Life, cannot sustain itself or the cause of Righteousness. Sooner or later, all earnest souls would forsake it, and give even to superstition—to the Roman Catholic Church, perhaps—to get a supply for their religious natures. But whilst the substance of religion is of God and Divine, the forms of it must change from age to age. And it is one of the encouraging signs of the times, that religion is gradually recovering from its long-continued sickness—its old, sepulchral, barbarous character, and becoming more and more natural, benevolent and genial—inspiring love and hope more than selfishness and fear.

But whilst our faith in the various forms of religion is diminishing, we need an increase of faith in the reality which these forms have always so

poorly represented. Hitherto there has been too exclusive a dependence upon olden prophets and apostles—upon *outward* teachers—and too little dependence, therefore, upon the *soul*, and upon God, as he speaks to the soul—upon the “*inner light*,” which meant so much with early Friends, and which means so little with Friends now. The elements of Divine truth are *within* us all, and they will develope themselves truly and fully, as we are loyal to ourselves and our highest ideal of duty to God.

But there should be a movement not only of “PROGRESSIVE FRIENDS,” but of all the sincere, honest, aspiring, earnest Friends of Progress, whose mission it shall be to put down all sin and wrong, and to build up God’s kingdom of love and peace—not only a destructive but a constructive movement. And the members of this great movement should know each other personally, as far as convenient, and feel a deep interest in each other and in each other’s labors, and, as far as possible, co-operate with each other for human redemption.

Your movement has the sympathy of our whole Hopedale Community, and we all look to you with sympathy and hope. Our mission is somewhat local—to build up a Community which shall illustrate the beauty, practicability and value of our general religious and humanitarian principles—but we have also always been laboring outside ourselves for the redemption, progress, and happiness of mankind, to the extent of our ability—particularly in the causes of Freedom and Peace. We are now, indeed, somewhat more *individualized*—less *organically* social than heretofore, but our objects and aims are the same—the construction of an Order of Society in which a Divine Spirit and Divine Principles shall rule, and love, harmony, and prosperity prevail. Yours, for light, love, liberty and progress; and may the blessing of the good God be with you all.

Wm. H. FISH.

FROM RICHARD MENDENHALL.

CRESCENT HILL, Kansas, Fourth mo. 27, 1856.

I HAVE watched with feelings of much interest the movements of Progressive Friends, and feel deeply enlisted in the labors of the friends of Progress every where. With the objects for which you are associated, as set forth in your circular, I feel a most cordial and hearty sympathy. I have long believed that sectarian prejudice is one of the greatest evils which curse the human race. It not only corrupts the minds of those who profess the Christian religion, and diverts them from the grand objects of life, but it operates as a bar and stumbling-block in the way of the honest seeker after truth, furnishes food for the cavilling mind of the sceptic, and is a very great hindrance to the spread of the Gospel of peace and salvation amongst the heathen branches of the human family. Is it not truly a lamentable fact, that after the lapse of so many centuries, since the advent of the Saviour, and the institution of the Christian religion upon earth, there is now so small a part of mankind who even *profess* Christianity, or upon whose minds its benign influence has yet dawned?

But may we not hope that a brighter day is dawning upon the world? Yea, I rejoice in believing that the dark shadows of sectarian bigotry and prejudice are breaking away before the light of truth, and it is a consoling evidence of the progress of this joyful consummation that men of different nations, and of various shades of opinion, are meeting and mingling together in a harmonious union of brotherhood.

RICHARD MENDENHALL.
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